

CRITICISM AND THE OLD TESTAMENT

H. THEODORE KNIGHT



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CRITICISM AND THE OLD TESTAMENT

A Popular Introduction

BY THE
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RK



TO
MY MOTHER

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τῶν σαλευομένων μετάθεσιν, ὡς πεποιημένων, ἵνα μείνῃ
τὰ μὴ σαλευόμενα.

‘A removal of the things which are being storm-tossed as of things which have been made, in order that the things which are not being storm-tossed may remain.’—Heb. xii. 27.

‘The critical study of the Bible by competent scholars is essential to the maintenance in the Church of a healthy faith. That faith is already in serious danger which refuses to face questions that may be raised either on the authority or the genuineness of any part of the Scriptures that have come down to us. Such refusal creates a painful suspicion in the minds of many whom we have to teach, and will weaken the strength of our own conviction of the truth that God has revealed to us. A faith which is always or often attended by a secret fear that we dare not inquire, lest inquiry should lead us to results inconsistent with what we believe, is already infected with a disease which may soon destroy it.’—*Extract from an Encyclical Letter adopted and issued by the Bishops assembled at the Lambeth Conference in 1897.*

PREFACE

THE aim of this book is indicated by its sub-title: it is nothing more than a 'popular introduction,' and is intended for those who have heard something about modern Biblical Criticism, but know little of its procedure or results. The majority of critical treatises appeal primarily to the scholar and the student. And although it is not difficult to find many volumes of a character 'introductory' to the Higher Criticism, yet as a rule they seem to confine themselves to special aspects of the question, rather than to give a general conspectus of the situation as a whole. What the average man wishes to know is not merely the date and authorship of various books and documents, nor even merely the grounds on which the critical verdict is based, but also its practical results and its influence upon our estimate of Hebrew literature and religion. How has modern scholarship affected our view of the Old Testament, alike as a historical narrative and as the record of a Revelation? is the question to which he desires an answer. And therefore an attempt at

a reply, however short it may have to be, must pass beyond the province of literary investigation, and touch at least upon some of the further issues which arise from an acceptance of the Higher Criticism.

My object, then, is to sketch in broad outline the change which criticism has brought about, and to indicate something of the striking manner in which it has increased the moral and spiritual worth of the Old Testament. The person whom I have had chiefly in view is the thoughtful member of the average congregation; and I have written, not in any sense as an expert, but simply as one of the parochial clergy, who wishes to popularise the main results of Hebrew scholarship, and so to lead the intelligent parishioner to study the Hebrew Scriptures with renewed interest and profit.

The first three chapters of my book are of a prefatory character, the next trio present very briefly the general verdict of criticism, and the eighth, ninth, tenth, and eleventh attempt to describe some of the corollaries that seem to flow from the critical position. The last chapter gives a few hints about the special value of the Prophets for to-day.*

My obligations to others are numerous. I am particularly indebted to Professor Driver's 'Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament,' which I have taken as a text-book, and have followed almost everywhere in my presentation of critical results. Chapters IV

and V are based entirely upon it, together with part of Chapter VI, and are little more than a summary of its conclusions. I should like to add here that, while I have derived my information on matters of literary analysis from Professor Driver, he is in no way responsible for the exegetical conclusions that I have subsequently drawn.

To Professor G. A. Smith's 'Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament,' I owe also a great deal, especially in Chapters IX and X. Indeed, it was the perusal of his fascinating pages, addressed primarily to preachers, which awakened in me, as one who has to occupy the pulpit, a desire to speak in writing to the occupant of the pew, and to show how criticism has enhanced the value of the Hebrew Scriptures. My debt to his lectures is both direct and indirect, though again I would say that my conclusions are not altogether to be laid to his charge. I have also utilised his commentary on Isaiah, in the 'Expositor's Bible.'

Amongst other writers to whom I am indebted, I ought to mention the late Professor W. Robertson Smith, the Bishop of Winchester (Dr. Ryle), and Canons Ottley, Sanday, and Kirkpatrick. The information given at the commencement of Chapter III is derived from the introduction to Messrs. J. Estlin Carpenter and G. Harford-Battersby's edition of the Hexateuch. My gratitude is also due to the Editor of the *Guardian*,

for kindly permitting me to reproduce in my closing chapter the substance of an article, entitled 'Prophetic Religion,' which appeared in his paper last autumn.

It is my earnest hope that nothing which I have said will cause pain to others. I write frankly for the modern reader; yet I trust that I have not shown a lack of sympathy towards those whose opinions are generally described as 'traditional.' The position in which the parochial clergy find themselves to-day is not an easy one, and it is hard to avoid the Scylla and Charybdis of silence and offence. On the one hand, by saying nothing about the Higher Criticism we deprive ourselves in the pulpit of much of the Old Testament, and rob not a few in our congregations of a spiritual nutriment which they are quite ready to assimilate. By attempting, on the other hand, to elucidate the critical verdict and to interpret the Hebrew Scriptures on its basis, we run the risk of disturbing faithful souls. Meanwhile, however, the world rolls on, and draws its own conclusions about the Church's doctrine. Have not the parochial clergy a duty towards other of their parishioners beside those who happen to frequent her worship? Amongst the many different causes for the decline in Church attendance, one at least is the prevalence of gross misconception as to what the Churchman of to-day is expected to believe about the Old Testament. And if only we state fearlessly what we hold to be true, perhaps we may hope,

not only to help the members of our congregations to cast their faith into a sounder mould, but also to win others who at present stand outside. Anyhow, it is disastrous that a gulf should exist between the work of modern scholarship and the popular religion. And if my book can in any way contribute to bridge the chasm, its object will have been attained.

In a bibliography I have ventured to mention several volumes which may be of interest to the general reader and useful to those responsible for teaching the young.

H. T. K.

SEVENOAKS,

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CHAPTER I

WHAT IS THE HIGHER CRITICISM?

‘BIBLICAL CRITICISM’ is a phrase that suggests to different persons very divergent ideas.

There are some to whom the words convey a dark and ominous meaning. To such people the notion of ‘criticising’ the Bible is sheer impiety, and all the critics are enemies of religion, spending their time and labour in attempting to undermine the foundations of the Christian faith. And the peril is all the more subtle, in that many of them profess a belief in Christianity, and are permitted to hold positions of influence in the Christian Church. They are disturbing the belief of thousands, causing real distress among the faithful, and doing an incalculable injury to human souls. The Bible is the Word of God: it is not to be criticised by the pride and presumption of the human intellect, but simply to be accepted as it stands.

To others, again, the terms suggest freedom and enlightenment. In their view modern criticism of the Bible is gradually liberating man from the fetters of an outworn and exploded superstition. The critics are to them among the pioneers of human progress, leading the world forward to a better day, when the minds of men will no longer be cramped and shackled by obsolete systems of belief. Dogmas which have long

ceased to be tenable still hold their ground in many quarters. But their doom is pronounced; and inevitably, though perhaps only by slow degrees, the spread of criticism will bring about its execution.

There is a third class of people, however, to whom Biblical criticism presents itself in a truer light. It appears to them, not in the guise of a dreaded enemy, but in that of a most welcome friend. For it does not come to pronounce a funeral oration over Christianity, but as the herald of the latest of its many resurrections. To such men as these the Revelation of the Bible, when it is placed in the full glare of modern knowledge, becomes infinitely more vital than it was before, more precious, more credible, and more inspiring. They do not seek to minimise the fact that, especially in reference to the Old Testament, criticism has produced a vast change, and has made the instructed reader look upon Holy Writ from a fresh standpoint. But they maintain that now at last he is using his own eyes, and not regarding the literature of Revelation through coloured glasses; while they try to emphasise the fact that, if the student will but throw aside the spectacles of conventional tradition and trust to the evidence of his native sight, he will discover in his Bible a mine of unimagined treasure.

Yet it is just here that the chief difficulty of the situation begins to arise. Those who have no real acquaintance with the Higher Criticism are not only unaware of the immense weight of its authority, but also find it hard to believe that it has enormously increased the moral and spiritual value of the Bible to the instructed reader. It is still thought by many that modern criticism is but a mushroom growth, resting upon a basis that is extremely precarious and insecure, and at the same time that it is wholly destructive

in character, and negative rather than positive in its results. And, at first sight, there is an apparent justification for their opinion. When the reader is told by the critics, for example, that the introductory chapters of the Book of Genesis present to us the Hebrew version of a mythology common to many of the Semitic peoples, he is apt to feel that he has lost more than he has gained by such a pronouncement. In place of an inspired account of the origin of the universe and its inhabitants, he has been informed that the preface to the Old Testament is but 'a collection of myths': and some time must elapse before he can perceive that in the Hebrew 'Book of Origins' he still possesses a true story of the genesis of all things. He requires to compare the Biblical record with the other versions of the Semitic mythology that have recently come to light. He requires to weigh the progressive character of God's Apocalypse of Himself to His ancient people. And he requires to take into consideration the character of that stage in the historical development of Revelation, at which the Hebrew stories were originally composed. For then, and then only, will he be able to realise the extent of his debt to the Higher Criticism, and to find afresh in these prefatory chapters of the Old Testament a genuine inspiration.

Now, all this cannot be accomplished in a moment. The process of inquiry set afoot by the Higher Critics is not yet complete in every detail, and it must obviously precede the growth of a method of Biblical interpretation that starts from the data supplied by modern criticism. The critics are like men engaged in the survey and construction of a railroad. A considerable length of the track has been already laid down, and a few coaches and engines have been built of a pattern suitable for the new metals. But if the line is

ever to become a favourite route for ordinary passengers, much work has yet to be done by the company of Biblical interpreters in the Christian Church; while some of the directors, and many of the shareholders, are in doubt as to the need of diverting the course of their general traffic, abandoning the ancient type of their trains and locomotives, and adopting modern fashions in the manufacture of their rolling stock. Will the average reader of the Bible, they ask, find it necessary to travel by this line? After all, we turn to Holy Writ, not in order to obtain some antiquarian and scholastic information, but to gain sustenance and refreshment for our souls. Edification is the true end of all Biblical study. The question as to when and by whom any particular book was written, is surely subordinate to the question as to what of moral and spiritual truth it actually contains. Popular exegesis, as well as individual meditation, can well dispense with a critical commentary. Is it justifiable to say that the general reader of the Scriptures, as distinguished from the professional student, requires to be provided with some account of their historic origin? Cannot the Bible be left to be its own interpreter?

To such a question an answer cannot be obtained until we have considered the function of modern criticism in both of the two departments into which its work is generally divided. The term 'Higher' is frequently misunderstood. The adjective does not connote any claim to a superiority of intellectual equipment. To speak of the 'so-called' Higher Criticism is as absurd as to speak of the 'so-called' higher mathematics. For 'Higher' and 'Lower' are but the descriptive epithets that are respectively applied to two branches of Biblical criticism, of which the former is the more advanced and comprehensive.

The Lower Criticism is purely textual. It investigates the extant documents, compares them with one another, with versions of them in different languages, and with quotations from them made by various authors, and thus tries to ascertain the actual wording of the original. No two editions of Shakespeare are precisely identical in their phraseology. And before the invention of printing, when the preservation of the text was dependent upon the skill and care of the individual copyist, a considerable diversity of readings was bound to arise, since each transcript involved the risk of a variation. Now, all the autographs of the Bible—the original documents of the Old and New Testaments—have long disappeared. The majority of the extant Hebrew manuscripts belong to the twelfth and following centuries of the Christian era. Only a few are more ancient, the earliest, whose age is certain, being a copy of the later prophets, now at St. Petersburg, which is dated 916 A.D. There exist, however, many translations of the Old Testament, some of which were made before, and some not long after, the commencement of our era. And, in addition to the primitive versions, a vast number of citations from the Hebrew Scriptures are to be found in the writings of the early Fathers of the Church and elsewhere. In the case of the New Testament, the oldest Greek manuscript, now at the Vatican, belongs to the beginning of the fourth century. To the same century are assigned the Sinaitic manuscript, discovered by Tischendorff in 1844, and the Alexandrian, which was presented to Charles I. in 1628 by the Patriarch of Constantinople, and now lies at the British Museum. Again, however, there are translations of the New Testament more primitive than any of the extant Greek manuscripts. Several of these early versions are as old as the second century, whilst

the quotations from the New Testament that lie scattered throughout the patristic writings begin with the time of the Apostles. It is upon this heterogeneous pile of documents that the Lower Criticism sets to work. Manuscripts, translations, and references are examined and compared in order to ascertain their age and their authority. The textual critic has nothing to do with the interpretation of the various documents. His sole aim is to discover the phraseology of the original text, whether Greek or Hebrew, to get as near as possible to its exact wording, to restore the *ipsissima verba* of the writers. And in the Revised Version of the Bible the English reader possesses the most recent product of the work of the Lower Criticism.

The Higher Critic starts upon a more interesting journey. Availing himself of the Lower Criticism, and finding himself in possession of a text which is, literally and verbally, the most accurate that can at the present moment be obtained, he passes on to inquire into the history of its original. When and by whom were these Hebrew and Greek documents composed? is the primary question which he attempts to answer. He analyses the text, studies its contents as well as its style and language, and estimates its authorship and its date. He invokes the aid of Biblical archæology, and compares his own evidence with that which is given by the spade of the explorer in Assyria and Egypt, in Palestine and in Asia Minor. Of course, it is impossible to draw a hard-and-fast line between the specific tasks of the Higher and the Lower Criticism; for the steps which lead up to the ultimate problem cannot always be separated from the problem itself. Nevertheless, a broad distinction exists between the two departments of critical labour. If the Lower Criticism is textual, the Higher is best described as literary in character.

The former simply tries to recover the original language; the latter tries to recount the genesis of the Bible, to tell the story of its composition, and to depict the conditions under which its books were originally brought into existence.

Now, it will be obvious that the Higher Criticism is a fact of greater moment to the average reader of the Bible than the Lower. The text of Holy Writ—of the New Testament even more than of the Old—is marvellously pure, and far less corrupt than the best specimens of text among the classics of Greek and Latin literature; so that the Revised Version, though an immense improvement on that of 1611, has not made any radical change in the way in which the literature of Revelation is popularly regarded. For textual criticism deals with minutiae which have interest mainly for the specialists, and the Christian public enters upon the product of their labours with comparative unconcern. On the other hand, as the verdict of the Higher Criticism becomes more widely known, it must affect a circle beyond that of the experts, since the result of their work is bound to influence the popular reception of the Scriptures. Questions about the date and authorship of the books of the Bible have a more important bearing than questions about their actual phraseology, in that the former inevitably raise questions about their historical value. And the general reader has begun to feel that the Higher Criticism is dealing with the Bible in such a way as to change the character of its authority, and that therefore it cannot fail to modify by degrees the estimate in which the literature of Revelation has long been regarded by the English people.

Yet many are at a loss to see the direction in which things are tending, or the policy which ought to be

adopted in the interests of religion. Without yielding to any unreasonable panic, the average man can perceive for himself that a great alteration is already in progress, and he is apt to be in doubt as to how far he is to follow the guidance of the Higher Critics. Are they not beginning to touch the fundamentals of Christianity? For centuries the Bible has been the basis of English religion. Do not the critics tell us to doubt its facts, to forget its inspiration, and to disparage its authority? Has not the unsettlement of belief which is characteristic of our day been produced to a large extent by the Higher Criticism? Is there not a danger that, in despair of finding any 'impregnable rock' on which to build their faith, men will flee to a haven of refuge in the Papal Church? Would it not therefore be wiser, in such a time of general revolt against religion, to be content to say nothing about the work of criticism, or at least to wait awhile for a more favourable opportunity?

Such questions are being asked by many in our generation. But to the last of them at least a categorical negative is the only reply that can be given. The sense of bewilderment is spreading so rapidly into every section of the populace that the policy of silence is no longer practicable. Indeed, much has already been lost by the timidity and reserve of the professional exponents of Holy Writ, and the advice to 'let sleeping dogs lie' is the product not only of a want of faith, but of a strange ignorance of the actual situation of affairs to-day. The policy which is required is not one of obscurantism, but of explicit and systematic teaching as to the origin of the Bible and the ground upon which our religion stands. And not the least debt that we owe to modern criticism lies in the fact that, at the very outset, it is forcing the Christian world

in England to overhaul its authorities, and to look the facts squarely in the face. For this reason, before we can enter upon any survey of the actual work of the Higher Critics, we must briefly find an answer to the question, What is Christianity, and what is its true foundation?

CHAPTER II

THE CHURCH AND THE BIBLE

IT is a truism to say that the Bible is not a single volume, but a collection of very diverse types of literature; yet it is a truism that is still frequently overlooked. The Bible is not only a 'Divine Library' of an extremely miscellaneous character, but it covers an extensive range of actual history, in that it describes the origin, growth, and decay of one religion, and the birth of another. There is, indeed, a wondrous unity in the Bible. Despite the remarkable variety of its literary contents, it remains an organic whole, in that the relation between the two Testaments is vital and essential. It must always be remembered, however, that there are two religions in the Bible, and that Revelation has itself a history. By slow degrees God has been pleased to disclose Himself to mankind, showing us gradually how to spell out the letters of His Name. Just as the education of the individual is a lengthy process, which, though partially completed before the start in life, never really comes to an end, so, too, has been the education of the human race in that knowledge which is the basis of 'the science of the sciences.' God's Apocalypse of Himself in history involved a long period of preparatory discipline, which reached its culmination in the story of the New Testa-

ment only in order to begin again. Thus, to look upon the whole of the Bible as of equal value and importance, to treat its literature as a series of dicta that can be used without reference to their historic context, and to regard its varied documents simply as a mass of oracular sentences, is to be guilty of a want of common-sense. The Old Testament was the Bible of the Jewish Church, and belongs primarily to the Ancient Dispensation. We are not Jews, but Christians; and for us the writings of the New Testament have a greater significance than those of the Old, in that the latter was the product of Judaism, while the authors of the New Testament were Christians like ourselves.

And, in addition to the fact that there are two religions in the Bible, there is an obvious contrast between the Old Testament and the New in reference to the periods of history which they respectively embrace. The story of the Hebrew Scriptures is much the longer of the two. Not only is the literary material of the Old Testament much larger in bulk than that of the New, but it includes within its pages the history of many centuries, while the New Testament confines itself to one. And, alongside of this contrast of chronological extension, there is a similar contrast in the length of time over which the process of their literary origin continued. Speaking broadly, the composition of the documents of the Old Testament lasted for more than 700 years (*c.* 850 to *c.* 150 B.C.), while the New Testament was completed in less than 70 (50 to *c.* 110 A.D.), the interval between the last of the Hebrew writings and the first of the Greek being about two centuries. Now, it was during this intervening period that our religion first stepped upon the stage of history: so that in order to understand its relation to the Bible,

and especially to the New Testament, we must note with care the historic origin of both alike. For it is only after we have considered the original status of the New Testament, that we can appreciate its present function and authority.

It has often been remarked, as a fact worthy of notice, that our Lord committed nothing to writing. He 'wrote but once, and then on sand.' For His method was altogether different from that of Mahomed, who tried to insure the life of his religion by dictating the Koran to his followers. Our Lord, on the other hand, not only wrote nothing Himself, but gave no orders to His Apostles to set down anything in writing. They were to 'go, make disciples of all the nations, baptising them into the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and teaching them to observe all things' (St. Matt. xxviii. 19) that He had commanded them. But no hint was given that they were to turn their attention to literary labour.

And the reason of such a policy is evident. The spoken word will always be a more effective instrument of teaching than the printed page. On the personality of the teacher, quite as much as on the authoritative standard of his doctrine, depends the resultant presentation of the truth. The Jewish Rabbis, with their blind idolatry of the letter of Holy Writ, stood as a constant example of prostituted zeal for 'the Oracles of God,' all the more eloquent because quite unconscious of their degradation. In the face of such a situation, it is not unnatural that our Lord was unwilling to have His religion cooped up within the covers of a book. He entrusted it to a number of living agents, who had been gradually trained by Him to be the preachers of His Gospel. His method was to gather by degrees a small

band of followers, to attach them to Himself by the bond of an implicit loyalty, and then to send them out with a commission to act in His Name. In a word, instead of dictating a Bible to His disciples, He gathered them into a society—the Christian Church—which was to be the historic witness to His Revelation, and through which the fruits of the world's redemption were to be gathered in. Thus, the Church is older than the New Testament; she is as old as Christianity itself. Established by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and endowed by Him with the gift of the Holy Ghost, the Church of the Apostles was the primary trustee of His religion, the original repository of the Gospel, and its authorised propagator and custodian.

Moreover, when we consider the procedure of the Apostolic Church, it is obvious that, as a matter of historic fact, she never surrendered her birthright as Guardian of that Revelation which our Lord committed to her care. Starting from Jerusalem, she went to Samaria, and then to Antioch, whence she spread rapidly over the whole of the Eastern Mediterranean. The Gospel which the Apostles preached was everywhere an oral Gospel. Accompanied by a staff of assistants, they separated in various directions, and commenced to found branches of the Christian society throughout the world. The Apostles preached, their followers instructed, the converts believed and were baptised, when as yet there were no Christian Scriptures in existence. And when at last the documents of the New Testament began to be composed, they were destined by their authors, not for persons ignorant of the Gospel, but for those who were Christians like themselves. The narrative of St. Luke, for example, was drawn up for the benefit of an 'instructed' Christian, called Theophilus, to whom

also was addressed the record of the Apostolic Acts. The majority of the Pauline letters, too, were written for the sake of local groups of Christians, planted and organised by himself in different places; while the rest were pastoral notes for the use of his successors in the ministry. It is a patent fact that all the books of the New Testament were composed for the edification of people who were already Christians. The object of the writers was, not to instruct the pagan world about the Christian religion, but to strengthen and establish the faithful in a religion about which they had previously been instructed. No careful student of the New Testament can fail to perceive that it presupposes in its readers an acquaintance with the Gospel. It was never intended to be an exhaustive manual, containing within its pages the entire structure of Christianity. Again and again it assumes that the Gospel (1 Cor. xv. 1 foll.; Gal. i. 8), the faith (Col. ii. 6, 7; Jude 3), the truth (1 St. John ii. 21), the Apostolic traditions (1 Cor. xi. 2; 2 Thess. ii. 15, iii. 6), and doctrine in general (Phil. iv. 9; Heb. vi. 1, 2; 2 St. Pet. i. 12), are familiar to those into whose hands it will fall. And the reason of this lies in the fact that the original readers of the New Testament were already members of the Christian Church, and had been taught the fundamental elements of Christianity as a prelude to their Baptism.

Not only so, but even when the documents of the New Testament had all been composed, a long time elapsed before they were acknowledged as Holy Writ. The process by which they were collected into a single volume, and gradually recognised as possessing a sacred character, was one which was not completed for several centuries. At first the Old Testament was the only Bible of the Christian Church. When the Apostle

speaks, for example, of the Scriptures which are able to make the reader 'wise unto salvation' (2 Tim. iii. 15), he is referring to the Hebrew Scriptures, which had now got the true key to their interpretation, 'through faith which is in Christ Jesus.' And when the Jews at Berea proved themselves to be 'more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily whether those things were so' (Acts xvii. 11), it was, of course, the Old Testament by which they tested the truth of the Apostolic Gospel. For quite a considerable period after the completion of the New Testament it was the Jewish Bible alone which was held to be of canonical authority in the Christian Church. Not until about one hundred years after the death of the last Apostle did the books of the New Testament begin to be regarded with the same veneration as the Old. Towards the end of the second century, the four Gospels, the Acts, and thirteen letters of St. Paul ranked definitely as Scripture, equal in dignity to the Hebrew Bible; and by the middle of the next century a distinct preponderance was assigned to the Christian over the Jewish writings. The remaining documents were longer in gaining admission into the Canon, but by the year 400 A.D. its contents were practically identical with our own. It must be remembered, however, that the process of canonisation was throughout the work of the Christian Church, and that not only was she the author of the New Testament, but it was she who defined its limits and gave to it its official authority.

The following dates will serve to fix approximately the chief landmarks in the origin of the Bible, and to indicate at a glance that from first to last the New Testament was the offspring of the Church:

The composition of the Old Testament... ..	c. 850 to 150 B.C.
The formation of its Canon	444 B.C. to 90 A.D.
The Nativity of our Lord	4 or 5 B.C.
The Feast of Pentecost and the birthday of the Church	29 A.D.
The composition of the New Testament... ..	50 to c. 110 A.D.
The formation of its Canon	200 to 400 A.D.

Now, it will be obvious that to identify the origin of our religion with the origin of the New Testament is to fall into an egregious blunder. Christianity is not the child of the New Testament, for the New Testament is the child of Christianity. It cannot be too strongly emphasised that the birth of the New Testament was but an incident in the history of the Church, and that for many a generation she preached the Gospel without the aid of any Canon save the Hebrew Scriptures. And if the question be asked, What, then, is the Gospel which the Church has preached from the beginning? the answer can be given in a sentence. The historic faith of Christendom is contained in that baptismal formula, which has been pronounced from the beginning over every soul who has become by Baptism a member of the Christian Church. For our religion, in its unchanging essence, is a faith in the Christian Name of God—that Name which our Lord has unfolded to us—the Name of ‘the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.’ Indeed, the utterance ‘Jesus is Lord’ (1 Cor. xii. 3) is a summary of the dogmatic content of the Christian Revelation. For Christianity is not a belief in a book, but in a Person, Who is the living Word of God, and through Whom we have access to the Father. And ‘other foundation can no

man lay than that which is laid, even Jesus Christ' (1 Cor. iii. 11).

Starting from this basis, we can approach the consideration of the Higher Criticism without misgiving. Those, of course, to whom 'the Bible and the Bible only' is the watchword of true religion, cannot fail to be somewhat alarmed at the prospect. But their fears will immediately be seen to be groundless by all who appreciate the value of the historic sense. Not only does the Bible contain within itself the literature of two distinct religions, of which the latter alone is the religion of Christendom, but the Christian Revelation itself is not confined within the pages of the New Testament, as it rests in addition on the witness of the Christian Church. Her creed and her worship, her ministry and her sacraments, have not been derived from the New Testament, but are reflected in germ again and again in the pages of the New Testament as part of the original equipment of that society to which our Lord committed the guardianship of His Gospel. It should never be forgotten that the Church is the parent of the New Testament; and though she owes an incalculable debt to her progeny, she is not indebted to it for the gift of her own existence.

Thus, we who are Christians have not one, but two, sources of external authority for our religion, viz., the Church upon the one hand, and the New Testament upon the other. Each of the two has its own value. The ecclesiastical tradition—embodied in the Apostles' Creed, and stereotyped in the Nicene and Athanasian confessions—gives a formal statement of the Christian dogma, and a safeguard against any serious misunderstanding about the Christian Name of God. The inspired literature—composed, collected, and canonised by the Christian Society—affords a perennial spring of

moral and spiritual edification in the story of our Lord's Advent and its Apostolic interpretation. And both lead us back to the ultimate Foundation in that unchanging Personality, Who 'speaks with authority,' and to Whom 'all authority is given'—the Same to-day as He was yesterday and will be for ever.

We can turn, therefore, without trepidation to the Higher Critics. And we have much more to learn from them about the Old Testament than about the New. Modern criticism of the New Testament is of more recent growth than the work of Hebrew scholarship, and its course has been wayward and eccentric. It started, not with linguistic facts, but with the tenets of a doctrinaire philosophy, which can now be seen to have militated against the candour and insight of the pioneers. 'Miracles are impossible—*ergo*, all records of miracles are historically untrue,' was the dogmatic presupposition with which criticism first approached the New Testament, together with an artificial formula derived from the Hegelian philosophy of history. And there are some critical schools whose work is still vitiated by the adoption of an *à priori* method, that rules out of court the witness of the Church and the spiritual experience of Christendom, and, instead of 'treating the New Testament like any other book,' begins with the demand that nothing shall be found in the New Testament of a unique and distinctive character. Nevertheless, although criticism of the Christian Scriptures, taken as a whole, is still to some extent in a state of flux, the general trend of its conclusions is now becoming perceptible, and its ascertained results are largely substantiating the estimate of tradition. The New Testament is emerging from the ordeal of modern criticism, not indeed unscathed, yet with little more than the smell of the fire upon it. If it has lost

its character of literal and verbal infallibility, it has not lost its value as an historical authority; not flawless, perhaps, in every detail, yet providing us with accurate and trustworthy evidence. It is now seen to be what it professes to be, not a volume dropped from the clouds, but an authentic narrative of our Redemption, accompanied by an Apostolic commentary. By what process any special book came to assume its present form, is doubtless an interesting problem. Yet it will probably be allowed to remain the study of the specialist rather than of the general reader of the Bible, in that the result that may be expected is not one which will profoundly affect the Gospel of Christendom or its credentials in the New Testament. More and more, as the origin of the Christian Scriptures is being scientifically investigated in the light of the testimony of the Christian Church, they are vindicating themselves to sober criticism as a reliable account of the world's redemption. And it is enough for the ordinary reader to be assured that, according to the verdict of competent scholars, he has in the New Testament a record of genuine history, together with its original interpretation by Apostles and Apostolic men.

In the case of the Old Testament, however, as we shall see, modern scholarship has a very different tale to tell.

CHAPTER III

THE METHOD OF CRITICISM

MODERN criticism of the Old Testament may be said to have begun in the year 1753.

It is true that, in the twelfth century, Ibn Ezra had pointed out that Moses could not have written an account of his own death, and that there are other passages in the Pentateuch (*e.g.* Gen. xii. 6, xxii. 14, Deut. iii. 11, etc.), which obviously belong to a much later date. And in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries more than one similar criticism had been made. Carlstadt in 1520 had expressed a doubt whether Moses wrote the whole of the Pentateuch. Luther, pointing to signs of post-Mosaic origin (*e.g.* Gen. xxxvi. 31), remarked that the question of authorship was really a matter of indifference. In 1570 a Flemish priest, Du Maes, instanced further passages (*e.g.* Gen. xiii. 18, xxii. 2 and 19; Josh. xiv. 17, etc.), and suggested that the Pentateuch, together with the Books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, had been compiled out of older materials in the time of Ezra. He was followed by Pereira, a Spanish Jesuit; and in 1620 another Jesuit, Bonfrère, continued the argument, which was again taken up by Episcopius in 1650. Then Hobbes in his 'Leviathan,' noting the singular characteristics of Deuteronomy, identified it with Josiah's Law-Book,

and affirmed that Ezra gave to the Pentateuch its present shape. His opinions were endorsed in 1671 by the philosopher Spinoza. But Simon, a French priest, maintained in 1682 that the discrepancies found in the Book of Genesis, which had been shown by De la Peyrère in 1656 to be such as proved a diversity of documentary sources, could be explained on the hypothesis that Moses had made use of sundry accounts that came originally from different hands. Le Clerc also, in 1685, expressed his disagreement with Spinoza, and dated the final edition of the Pentateuch about the period of the establishment of the monarchy.

All these suggestions, however, were tentative and uncertain, because the writers had not yet obtained possession of a clue which should enable them to estimate the conditions of the literary problem. That the Pentateuch is made up of a variety of documents, was now acknowledged by scholars generally. But no light had as yet been thrown on the mode by which these documents were to be distinguished from one another. To Jean Astruc—a Roman Catholic physician of Montpellier—belongs the credit of discovering the key by which advance could now be made. He was the first to direct attention, in 1753, to literary facts as providing a sound and reliable criterion for that analysis of the text which is the primary work of modern criticism. Investigating the two stories of the Creation, he pointed out that they are distinguished from one another by a remarkable linguistic peculiarity. The first (Gen. i. to ii. 3) always speaks of the Creator as ‘Elohim,’ the ordinary Hebrew term for God; while the other story (Gen. ii. 4 to fin.) calls Him ‘Jehovah,’ or ‘Jehovah-Elohim,’ which was the national title of the Lord of Israel. By this discovery the foundation-stone of modern criticism was laid. A few years

later, in 1780, Eichhorn—a German scholar, who had independently come to the result of Astruc's enquiry—confirmed its accuracy by further research. He showed that a distinction in the Name of Deity is accompanied by other parallel variations in the Hebrew text. He classified a number of expressions characteristic of the two kinds of passages, all of which proved of value for the work of literary dissection. Then, in 1798, Ilgen—another German—carried the process of analysis still further. He discovered that even within those sections where the word 'Elohim' is used for God, there are 'double accounts of the same event, which can be distinguished from one another alike in vocabulary and style.' Three documents, therefore, had been already detected, the 'Jehovistic' on the one hand, and a pair of 'Elohistic' writings on the other.

Hitherto, the task of exploration had not been continued beyond the sixth chapter of Exodus, where God is said to have revealed Himself under the title of 'Jehovah': for every reader could feel that there was an obvious reason why, in the Elohistic narratives, the term 'Jehovah' should not have been used at an earlier stage. An independent line of criticism, however, was now started, which turned the search-light of Hebrew scholarship on to the whole of the Pentateuch and onward into the Book of Joshua. Geddes—a Scottish priest of the Roman Church—struck by the mass of historical discrepancies and contradictions in the introductory books of the Old Testament, jumped to the conclusion that they were based on a large number of documentary sources. This conjecture was taken up in Germany by Vater, but was destined to be modified by subsequent investigation. In 1805 De Wette clearly showed the peculiar character of the Book

of Deuteronomy, both in language and contents. Its theological standpoint and its oratorical exuberance of style are so unique, that it must be the product of a single pen; whilst its treatment of the same events or legislation is so different from that found elsewhere in the Pentateuch, as to prove its singularity of authorship. Here, then, a fourth document has been laid bare. Bleek—following Geddes—demonstrated the fact that Joshua is really an integral part of the preceding books, in that the same linguistic strata are apparent in it as in Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. Ewald set to work to disentangle the four writings of the Hexateuch in detail. Vatke, Georg, and Reuss showed how the date of any legislative code can be ascertained by comparing its contents with the historical records of the age that lies parallel to it. And—to pass over several other names—Hupfeld, in 1850, established Ilgen's conclusion on a firmer basis. He remarked that, of the two 'Elohistic' writings, the one has throughout a distinctively sacerdotal character, and obviously forms the literary groundwork of the Hexateuch, since it can be extracted from the rest and read as a coherent whole. He also pointed out that the other was so closely interwoven with the 'Jehovistic' narrative as to be frequently indistinguishable from it on the basis of purely linguistic data; and he suggested that they must have been combined into a single composite document before being incorporated with the sacerdotal code.

Thus, more than half a century ago the broad lines of analysis in reference to the Hexateuch were already laid down, and they have been tested and verified again and again by subsequent criticism. A large number of scholars, often working independently of one another, have gone over the ground and come to conclusions that are practically identical. But the process of

investigation which began with the Hexateuch has been carried forward into the remaining books of the Old Testament. During the last fifty years in Holland, Germany, and France, in Great Britain and America, a series of brilliant men—representative of every school in Christendom—have devoted themselves to the critical elucidation of the Hebrew Scriptures. It is impossible, however, to describe their work in detail, and to give a catalogue of the workers' names would be of little value. Nor are we concerned at present with the actual verdict that they have passed upon the literary origin of the various books, but rather with the means by which their results have been obtained. The validity of their conclusions is not a matter upon which only the experts are competent to form an opinion. In many respects the evidence is of such a character that its weight can be estimated by the general reader of the Bible as well as by the Hebrew scholar. If specific questions about style and language belong primarily to the Hebraist's department, the testimony of historical fact in the substance of the Old Testament can be readily appreciated by the intelligence of the Christian public. And it cannot be too clearly explained that in large degree it is upon historical data that the work of modern criticism is based.

Take, for example, the stories of the Creation, with which the Higher Criticism originally started. No reader of the English text can fail to notice the discrepancies that are exhibited by the accounts given in the first and second chapters of the Book of Genesis. In the former (Gen. i. 1 to ii. 3) God is said to have made man, both male and female, on the last day of Creation, while the second chapter (ii. 4-25), omitting all reference to the six days of God's workmanship, says that man was formed before plant or beast, and then

recounts the creation of Eve as the last of all His works. The former describes the Creation of the physical universe as an orderly process culminating in the human race; whereas, in the second chapter, its stages are represented as undertaken on man's behalf, the vegetable and animal worlds, and even the female sex, being called into existence for his benefit. Here is an obvious contradiction of fact, pointing to a duality of authorship. And, in addition, even the English reader is able to perceive a variation of literary treatment in the two narratives. The style of the first is redundant and precise and systematic, while that of the latter is personal and picturesque. Thus, not only in actual substance, but also in language and general standpoint, the two accounts can be seen to be distinct: so that, when the Hebrew scholar tells us that they come from different pens at different epochs of Jewish history, he merely corroborates the verdict of our common sense.

Again, let the reader study the record of the Deluge, and he will find that it is also a combination of a couple of divergent tales. At first Noah is instructed to take into the Ark (vi. 19) a pair of every living thing; in accordance with which we are informed that there went in with him 'two and two of all flesh, wherein is the breath of life' (vii. 15). But in another passage (vii. 2) a distinction is drawn between clean and unclean animals, and Noah is bidden to preserve seven of the former class. Besides, the length of the flood is variously stated. From one of the records we learn that there were seven days of warning (vii. 4, 10), forty days and nights of rain (vii. 12, viii. 6), and three periods lasting each for a week (viii. 10, 12) of gradual subsidence, making a total of sixty-eight days. The other story gives the Deluge a duration of more than a

year. It says that it began on the 17th day of the second month (vii. 11), and ended next year on the 27th of the same month (viii. 14), adding that for 150 days 'the waters prevailed upon the earth' (vii. 24), and after the end of another 150 days they 'were abated' (viii. 3). To any attentive reader it is manifest that the text as it now stands is of a composite nature.

Again, take another 'doublet' in the Book of Genesis, the twofold account of the origin of the names Bethel and Israel, which is of special interest in that both of the narratives use the term 'Elohim' for God. In one passage (xxviii. 19) we are told that God appeared to Jacob as he was journeying to Padan-aram, at a place called 'Luz,' and that the patriarch changed its name to Bethel, so that when Elohim appears to Jacob in Padan-aram, He calls Himself 'the God of Bethel' (xxx. 13). But, according to the second account, it was after Jacob had left Padan-aram that God appeared to him, and that consequently he called the place 'Bethel' (xxxv. 15). Similarly, the title of Israel is said at one time (xxxii. 28) to have been bestowed on Jacob when he wrestled with the Unknown Visitant at the ford Jabbok, while the other narrative (xxxv. 10) dates the origin of his tribal name from the occasion of his return from Padan-aram. Such discrepancies are inexplicable, until we recognise that the story of Jacob contains two documents, distinguishable from one another, not only by linguistic analysis, but by the evidence of their historical contents.

And, again, note a couple of contradictions in the Book of Joshua. A monument was set up to commemorate the passage of the Israelites across the Jordan. One account (iv. 8, 20), however, says that it was built at Gilgal on the western bank with twelve stones taken by the people out of the bed of the river ;

but in another verse (iv. 9) we are informed that Joshua built the cairn in the midst of the stream, where it was still remaining in the writer's day. Besides, there is a double record of the ambush laid against Ai, which is said at one time (viii. 3, 9) to have consisted of 30,000 men, and in another place (viii. 12, 14) to have numbered about 5,000. In these cases the linguistic distinction is slight, and the analysis is largely dependent on the discrepancies of actual fact in the substance of the record.

It would not be difficult to multiply such instances, not only throughout the Hexateuch, but in other of the historical books of the Old Testament. Yet the existence of a variety of documents is not the sole fact that is disclosed by a careful scrutiny of the existing narratives. The date of their original composition is also a matter which they are themselves able to elucidate. For when once the literary strata have been laid bare, their chronological relation to one another can be ascertained by mutual comparison, and their age determined by historical evidence as well as by that of philology. It is the actual content of any document, its theological tone and its general substance, that provides the critics with the most impressive witness to its date.

Consider, for example, the three documentary stages of Hebrew law which modern scholarship has found embedded in the earlier books of the Old Testament, and to which it has given the respective titles of the 'Prophetical,' the 'Deuteronomic,' and the 'Priestly.' The discovery of the literary origin of these codes has been one of the most pregnant results of the Higher Criticism, in that it has at last unfolded the true relation between the Law and the Prophets, and enabled us to read the story of God's Revelation of Himself to His ancient people in its proper order. The heterogeneous

conglomerate of laws in the Pentateuch was first differentiated by philological analysis into three groups, of which by far the largest belongs to the sacerdotal document. On comparing these with one another, it was soon found that they exhibit progressive stages of a legislation which is fundamentally one, and that they may broadly be described as 'pastoral,' 'monarchical,' and 'hierocratic' in character. The Decalogue (Exod. xx. 1-17), the Book of the Covenant (Exod. xx. 22 to xxiii. 33), and the so-called 'Second Decalogue' (Exod. xxxiv. 11-26), contain enactments intended to regulate the life of a pastoral community. Then the legislation of the Book of Deuteronomy (Deut. iv. 1 to xxviii. 68) is adapted to the needs of a more complex civilization, and shows distinct traces of the moral influence of the prophets of the monarchy. Lastly, the sacerdotal code (Exod. xxv. 1 to xxxi. 18; Lev., and Num. i. 1 to xix. 22) belongs to a society over which the priesthood is supreme, being full of the precise minutiae of ritual. Now, these collections of statutes manifestly represent three grades of legislative elaboration. And, laying them alongside of the historical records of the Old Testament, the date of their origin becomes apparent. The first corresponds to the agricultural stage of Jewish history, and lasts into the period of the monarchy; the second belongs to the conditions and the experience of the later kings, and the third to the time of the return from the Babylonian exile.

A single instance may be adduced as an illustration. The patriarchal narratives in the Book of Genesis are contained in the two documents entitled the 'prophetical' and the 'sacerdotal' histories. Now, it was in the interval between the birth of these two narratives that, through the publication of Deuteronomy and the consequent reforms of Josiah, a veto was put on sacri-

fices at any other place than the temple at Jerusalem. Accordingly, we find that in the prophetic narrative the patriarchs offer their sacrifices at Shechem, 'the terebinth of Moreh' (Gen. xii. 67), at Bethel (xii. 8, xxviii. 11), at Hebron, 'the terebinth of Mamre' (xiii. 18, xviii. 1), at Beersheba (xxi. 33, xxvi. 25), and at Mizpeh of Gilead (xxxii. 54), which were among the shrines to which the Israelites resorted in the times of Amos and Hosea. The sacerdotal historians, however, being strict in their ritualistic views, never make any allusion to such license of patriarchal worship; nor do they localise the appearance of Jehovah at any of the high places that were frequented in the eighth century, but had been swept away by Josiah's reformation.

This verdict—viz., that the legislation of the Pentateuch as a whole was not completed until the days of Ezra—is a fact of capital importance to the student of the Old Testament, in that at last it makes the actual story of the Hebrews an intelligible tale. The Law is not anterior to the Prophets, but the Prophets, on the whole, are anterior to the Law. For if Moses was really the author of the entire Pentateuch, it is inconceivable that for many centuries none of his successors should make allusion to it. Any careful reader of the course of Hebrew history must have noticed that, from the Mosaic age onward, it betrays no familiarity with a written legislation until the period of the monarchy, and the fact may have caused him considerable surprise. All the earlier leaders of the people behave as if there was no Law in existence; while the historian adds that until the kings began to reign over Israel, 'every man did that which was right in his own eyes' (Judg. xvii. 6, xxi. 25). Even the early prophets of the monarchy—Amos and Hosea, Isaiah and Micah—make no appeal to the august sanction of the name of Moses as the

author of a written law, but are acquainted only with such regulations as those contained in 'the Book of the Covenant.' Then Jeremiah—who lived subsequently to Josiah's reign—though he is strongly influenced by the tone and spirit of the Deuteronomic legislation, has no knowledge of the Priestly ritual. And Ezekiel—who flourished during the Babylonian exile, and was a priest as well as a prophet—is aware of the sacerdotal enactments, not seemingly in their final form, but rather during the process of their codification. Thus, the evidence of the prophetic as well as of the historical books tends to confirm the critical explanation of the origin of the Law. The documents of the Pentateuch are not the work of the Mosaic age, but of a much later day. A new light is thrown on the growth of Hebrew literature and on the development of the Revelation which it records, the prophetic stage on the whole being prior to the legal, which did not overshadow the former until after the return from Babylon. And the proof of this momentous fact is obtained, not solely by means of literary analysis, but through a mass of convergent testimony supplied by the Old Testament itself.

It will be obvious, therefore, that the work of modern criticism rests upon a solid basis of fact. Not only is it of far from recent origin, but its method throughout has been inductive and historical. To speak of its conclusions as rash and hasty, supported chiefly by ingenious guesses, and dependent upon the precarious judgment of a handful of scholars, is to misconceive the truth of the situation. The critics have not been following out the whims of a speculative fancy, but have started with the internal evidence furnished by the Hebrew Scriptures, and have gradually worked out a consistent story of their origin. It is impossible to do justice to the critical argument without an elaborate

survey of its details. Yet, as it is still thought by many that its results have been reached by an insecure method of procedure, it may be well to give two or three further illustrations, and to indicate briefly in each case the grounds of the critical conclusion.

Take the latter portion of the Book of Isaiah, which is now assigned to the period of the Babylonian exile. What is the reason for this verdict? In part it is due to linguistic considerations, but even more to the theological atmosphere of the last twenty-six chapters, and most of all to the historical allusions which they contain. 'Isaiah's style,' writes Dr. Driver, 'is terse and compact; the movement of his periods is stately and measured; his rhetoric is grave and restrained. In these chapters, however, a subject is often developed at considerable length; the style is much more flowing; the rhetoric is warm and impassioned; and the prophet often bursts out into a lyric strain in a manner to which Isaiah affords no parallel. Force is the predominant feature of Isaiah's oratory. Persuasion sits upon the lips of the prophet who is speaking here; the music of his eloquence, as it rolls magnificently along, thrills and captivates the soul of its hearer.' Besides, the relation of Israel to Jehovah is depicted here in very different colours from those employed by Isaiah. The figure of the coming Messianic King is absent, and his place is taken by the Righteous Servant of Jehovah, Who, through suffering, is to fulfil His prophetic mission to the world at large. Above all, these chapters are set in an historical framework which is not that of the age of Isaiah. They frequently speak of Jerusalem as ruined and deserted, and describe the chastisement which the Jews are experiencing at the hands of the Chaldæans. The prospect of return is said to be imminent, and the

men whom the prophet addresses are not in the situation of the contemporaries of Isaiah at Jerusalem, but of the captives of a later day in Babylonia. Cyrus is actually named as the coming deliverer of the exiles, and his victories are quoted as a proof that now at last the day of liberation is at hand. In fact, the whole argument of these chapters is incomprehensible, unless they were written subsequently to the time when the triumphant career of Cyrus had already begun.

Again, take the two Books of Chronicles, which are really a preface to those of Ezra and Nehemiah, the quartette forming a continuous record of Jewish history. If the parallel narratives in the Books of Samuel and Kings are compared with the story in Chronicles, the latter is seen to be a somewhat embroidered version, written from a sacerdotal standpoint. Not only does the chronicler freely enhance the military exploits of the Jews, and throw a halo round several of their leaders, but he assigns to the period of the monarchy the establishment of all the ritual enforced by the Priestly Code, and passes judgment upon each sovereign in accordance with his attitude towards the ceremonial ordinances of the temple. In his choice of topics, his fondness for genealogies and statistics, and the prominence which he everywhere gives to the ecclesiastical apparatus of religion, the chronicler is the typical representative of later Judaism. And as he carries his genealogical lists down to at least the sixth generation after Zerubbabel, his date cannot be earlier than the close of the Persian Empire or the beginning of the Greek. It is obvious that, despite his statistical precision, in the main his book is not of much independent value to the historian.

Lastly, consider the Book of Daniel, which is now recognised to be the latest of the canonical writings,

and to have been published during the Maccabæan revolt from under Antiochus Epiphanes. The book contains a number of Persian words, and a few that are Greek; while several of its chapters are written in Aramaic—a dialect which gradually became the vernacular of Palestine after the return from Babylonia, and which is also found in the Book of Ezra and elsewhere. Moreover, several historical inaccuracies and exaggerations can be detected in the narrative, showing that they are based upon the tradition of a later age than that of Daniel himself. The author also speaks of ‘the Chaldæans’ as synonymous with ‘the wise men’—a sense unknown until after the end of the Babylonian Empire, and dating from a time when the term had lost its racial connotation, and had long been restricted to the order of the astrologers. Besides, the book is not placed among ‘the Prophets’ in the second division of the Jewish Canon, but belongs to the third group of writings, which did not begin to be canonised by official authority until the Maccabæan period. The author of the Apocryphal Ecclesiasticus—writing shortly after the year 200 B.C.—mentions Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the minor prophets in the course of his enumeration of Jewish heroes, but is silent in regard to Daniel. Above all, the writer never uses the prophetic assertion, ‘Thus saith the Lord.’

Such considerations have a cumulative force that can only be appreciated by a detailed study. And, in addition, the general outlook of the book is noticeably different from that of the earlier prophets, and is peculiarly appropriate to the time of the last great struggle of the Jews for national independence. Under Antiochus the very existence of the nation was threatened as it never had been before, and the faithful were asking anxiously when the heathen domination would come to

an end and the glorious ideal promised by the older prophets would be realised. In the Book of Daniel the answer to such questionings is given in a pictorial drama. The author's use of symbolic imagery is such that his book is really an Apocalypse. It is, in truth, the first specimen of a type of literature which flourished extensively in the closing centuries of the Old Dispensation and at the beginning of the New, and which finds its noblest expression in the Revelation of the Apostle John.

CHAPTER IV

THE RISE OF HEBREW LITERATURE

IT has been said that modern criticism has unlocked the secret of the Old Testament by placing in the hands of the reader the key to its true interpretation. And the claim is really no arrogant pretension, in that it is now possible for the first time to read the Hebrew Scriptures in the order of their historical development. For the historic order is that of the Divine economy of Revelation ; and if the reader is to appreciate its story aright, he must begin by recognising its progressive character as reflected in the evolution of its literature. All this was impossible before the days of the Higher Criticism, which has at last lifted the cloud that has overhung the Hebrew Bible from the beginning. ‘When one looks back over the history of the interpretation of the Old Testament,’ writes a modern scholar, ‘one gets the impression that the Church has been wholly incapable of assimilating it. The book has been sealed with seven seals. One is reminded of Isa. xxix. 11, 12. Even he who could otherwise read well enough was hindered by the seals ; the rest got no good from the book because they could not read. Who was it, then, who so closed up the book ? It was the Sopherim and Perushim, the scribes and Pharisees, when they made the end into the beginning ; when they

put the Law first and the Prophets afterwards ; when they canonised their Scriptures in the wrong order, and so created the illusion which was to last for centuries, that the religion of Israel began with a Law. No one who starts from this assumption will ever come to understand the Old Testament.'

In trying, therefore, to pass in review the verdict of modern scholarship upon the origin of the Old Testament, it will be advantageous to follow the chronological rather than the canonical order of the books. Genesis was not the first to be written, nor was Malachi the latest. Indeed, the sequence as it is found in the English Bible is even more unhistorical than that of the Jewish Canon, the formulation of which by the Jewish rabbis has been the *fons et origo* of so much misunderstanding. We must therefore begin by rearranging the literature of the Hebrews, and grouping its various sections in their original order. To do so with absolute precision is, of course, impossible, not only because the date of some of the books can only be approximately ascertained, but also because they are frequently of a composite nature and their contents belong to different ages. And to describe their origin in detail would involve an extensive survey of the process of their compilation, and of the reasons as well as the results of modern criticism. Only the barest summary can be attempted ; while literature, rather than history or religion, is that with which for the present we shall be concerned. It is noticeable that the writings, and also the sections of the composite documents, whose date is still a matter of real uncertainty, are few in number and of far less importance than the rest. The origin of the vast majority of the books has been determined in such a way that

the broad outlines of the development of Hebrew literature can now be traced.

I. THE BEGINNINGS.—Among the Hebrews, as elsewhere, literature began with poetry, and military exploits seem to have been the favourite subject of their earliest ballads. One of the oldest is the Song of Deborah (Judg. v.), which commemorates the overthrow of Sisera and the army of the Canaanites. Two collections of patriotic songs are mentioned by name—‘The Book of the Wars of Jehovah’ (Num. xxi. 14), from which the Song of the Well (*ibid.* 17, 18) and the song of triumph over the King of the Amorites (*ibid.* 27-31) appear to be quoted, and ‘The Book of Jashar,’ or ‘the Upright’ (Josh. x. 13; 2 Sam. i. 18, and iii. 33, 34), from which a couple of excerpts are given in David’s elegies over Saul and Abner. Other primitive lyrics are to be found in the blessing of Jacob (Gen. xlix. 2-28), the song of Moses at the Red Sea (Exod. xv. 1-19), and perhaps the prophecies of Balaam (Num. xxiii. 7-10, 18-24, xxiv. 3-9, 15-24). Such lyrical fragments would be handed down orally long before they were committed to writing; and the date of the Book of Jashar, which mentions the doings of King David, cannot be earlier than his reign.

In addition to these patriotic songs floating amid the traditions of the people, it is beyond question that some legislative enactments also had assumed a literary form before the commencement of the monarchy. That Moses, though not the author of the Pentateuch, was the ultimate founder of Hebrew law, is a fact that lies beyond dispute. His judicial functions, as described by an early historian (Exod. xviii. 13-27), would give rise to a primitive code of ordinances, while the nucleus of the Decalogue may justly be ascribed to the time of his sojourn in Mount Horeb. ‘The Book of

the Covenant' (Exod. xx. 23 to xxiii. 33)—so called first by Wellhausen because it embodies throughout the idea of a contract between God and His people—is universally acknowledged to be the most ancient section of the Law. Nor is it unlikely that, together with the substance of the Ten Commandments (Exod. xx. 1-17), and perhaps another fragment (Exod. xxxiv. 10-26) which is clearly akin to the legislation of 'the Covenant,' it had reached the stage of literature before the tenth or ninth century before Christ. Legal and official documents undoubtedly formed the beginnings of Hebrew prose.

II. THE PROPHETICAL HISTORIES. — The first attempt, however, to draw up a continuous narrative of Hebrew history may be assigned with confidence to the period of the early kings, some time after the disruption of the Hebrew commonwealth into the two Kingdoms of Israel and Judah. It seems to have originated within 'the Schools of the Prophets,' which had been established by Samuel for the nurture of the prophetic gift. The pupils in these colleges were under the direction of some leading seer, whom they frequently called their 'father' (cp. 1 Sam. x. 12; 2 Kings ii. 12), so that they came to be known as 'the Sons of the Prophets' (1 Kings xx. 35, etc.).

Now, Elijah was always regarded by the Jews as the primary representative of prophecy, just as Moses was held to be the founder of their legislation. Nor is it unlikely that, although Elijah committed nothing to writing, his sayings would be carefully treasured by his disciples. By his day, at least (c. 875-852 B.C.), the spirit of Hebrew prophecy had been born. And, in the course of the succeeding century, two versions of the story of the Hebrews were composed by members of the prophetic schools, the *Jehovistic* in the Southern

Kingdom, and the *Elohistic* in the North, of which the former seems to be the earlier in date. Parallel as they are, and yet manifestly independent, these narratives seem to embody 'the special form which tradition had assumed in each' of the two kingdoms. For, while their authors have incorporated sundry fragments both of poetry and prose, it is undoubted that their chief material was the folk-lore of the people. Stories attached to names and places famous in the days of old were in each case strung together in the form of a consecutive history, describing the origin of the nation, its primitive migrations, its escape from Egypt, and its journey to the promised land. After the fall of Samaria in 722 B.C. the *Elohistic* document was carried into the Kingdom of Judah, where it was subsequently fused with the *Jehovistic* into a single composite record. This writing is known as '*the prophetic narrative*,' and forms one of the main elements of the Hexateuch.

The style of this document, especially of its *Jehovistic* sections, is flowing and picturesque; and the vivid character of its descriptions of the patriarchs and the Exodus, with which every reader of the Old Testament is familiar, is due to the fact that these stories had been related orally for centuries alongside of the popular ballads of the nation. Yet the purpose of the primitive historians of Israel was not simply to tell a series of graphic tales. Throughout their narrative runs a vein of lofty thought, converting each incident into a vehicle of moral teaching, and showing that Jehovah had been from the first the Arbiter of His people's destiny and the Support of their ancestors and national heroes. Rightly has their history been termed '*prophetic*,' in that it inculcates the germ of those truths about God's Providential Righteousness, which were afterwards developed and enforced by the pro-

phets, and which had already found a congenial soil among the pupils of Elijah and Elisha.

With the prophetical document of the Hexateuch may be classed the two Books of *Samuel*, which really form one volume, probably dating from the middle of the seventh century. They are obviously composite, a difference of tone as well as of substance appearing in several passages, Samuel, for example, being represented at one time (1 Sam. ix. 1 to x. 16, xi. 14, 15) as a seer commissioned by Jehovah to anoint Saul, and at another (1 Sam. viii. 4-22, x. 17-24) as a judge yielding with reluctance to the popular clamour for a king. The compiler may have utilised sundry chronicles drawn up by earlier prophets (cp. 1 Chron. xxix. 29), together with the official records (2 Sam. viii. 16, xx. 24) that began to be kept at the commencement of the monarchy.

III. THE PROPHETS OF ISRAEL.—Meanwhile the first group of prophets had spoken, or, rather, the first of those whose utterances have been preserved under their own name. The scene of their ministry was the Northern Kingdom, and its date the reigns of Jeroboam II. and his successors, while it is noticeable that neither of them was a member of the prophetical order. *Amos* was 'no prophet, neither a prophet's son' (Amos vii. 14), but a herdman of Tekoa, a village not far south of Jerusalem, so that it was as a stranger that he appeared at the sanctuary of Bethel to announce God's judgment upon iniquity. On the other hand, *Hosea* was a native of Israel, and his life-long ministry was the final word of God to His apostate people. In 722 B.C. Samaria was taken by the Assyrians, and the Israelites deported across the Euphrates, so that Hosea is justly described as the prophet of the decline and fall of the Northern Kingdom.

When and by whom the utterances of these prophets

were first committed to writing, it is impossible to ascertain. Yet there is no reason why the books of Amos and Hosea should not have been written by themselves, though, of course, they are not a verbatim report of all that they said, but a compressed summary of their teaching. Both of them are of peculiar importance to the reader of the story of the Hebrews, in that they supply him for the first time with a detailed contemporary notice of the ideas and institutions of Hebrew religion.

IV. ISAIAH.—Before the fall of Samaria, however, the voice of prophecy had been heard in Judah also, and from the lips of one of its greatest representatives. In 740 B.C., 'the year that King Uzziah died' (Isa. vi. 1), *Isaiah* received his call, and his prolonged ministry of forty years embraced the reigns of Jothan, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. Unlike Amos and Hosea, he seems to have been of noble blood, and for a long time he held a position of commanding influence in Jerusalem. He is the most striking figure of the monarchical period. Most of his utterances were concerned with the Southern Kingdom and its metropolis, but he spoke also to Israel, and embraced within the scope of his vision a large number of the surrounding nations, uttering the doom of Moab and Damascus, of Egypt, Babylon, Tyre, and many others. He induced Hezekiah to attempt a reform of the national religion. And it was he who guided the Southern Kingdom through the greatest crisis of its existence, when the wave of the Assyrian advance had swept over the country, and the army of Sennacherib was only checked at the very walls of Jerusalem.

With Isaiah ought to be reckoned his younger contemporary, *Micah*, 'a man of the people,' and a native of Moresheth; although it is probable that the closing

section of his book (Mic. vi., vii.) contains the utterances of some other prophet.

Within the canonical Book of Isaiah there is much that cannot be assigned to his own pen. Not only do the later chapters (2 Isa. xl.-lxvi.) belong—as we have already seen—to the great prophet of the exile, but more than one of the earlier prophecies seem to date from a subsequent period; while the compiler of the volume has also appended to them an historical section (Isa. xxxvi. 1 to xxxix. 8), excerpted with verbal alterations from the Book of Kings (2 Kings xvi. 13 to xx. 19). Among the authentic utterances of Isaiah, however, the noble splendour of his genius is apparent. His style abounds in picturesque and impressive imagery, while the wealth of his imagination and the concentrated energy of his thought make his prophecies rank among the grandest specimens of Hebrew literature. A special interest also attaches to them from the fact that they clearly depict the advent of a King, Who is to be the Deliverer and Regenerator of His people.

V. THE BOOK OF THE LAW.—In the year 621 B.C., during the reign of Josiah, a book was discovered in the Temple by the high priest (2 Kings xxii. 8, foll.), and when the king heard its contents he immediately set on foot a reformation. This volume consisted of the major portion of the Book of *Deuteronomy* (Deut. v. 1 to xxvi. 19, and xxviii.), its preface and appendix being added at a later date. It seems likely that the book was written about the close of the age of Isaiah, and was lost during the idolatrous reaction that followed. Hebrew legislation had hitherto been confined to the Decalogue, and the enactments contained in the writings of the prophetic historians, and had been chiefly the concern of rulers and kings. On the other hand, Deuteronomy was from the first intended to be a

homiletic manual, its rhetorical style being due to the fact that it was composed for public edification. The author's object was, not to set forth new laws, but rather to emphasise the importance of an existing code and to supply a motive for its observance. Based, in fact, upon the prophetic narrative of the Hexateuch, Deuteronomy does but expand the legislation of 'the Book of the Covenant,' suffusing it throughout with prophetic enthusiasm. It inculcates the love of God as the mainspring of human action ; and, in presenting the interdependence of religion and morality, may be said to form the bridge between Hebrew Law and Prophecy.

The influence of this Law-Book was profound. The central portion of the Book of *Judges* (Judg. ii. 6 to xvi. 31), for example, received its shaping from a writer who was steeped in Deuteronomic doctrine. It appears to be based upon an earlier collection of narratives, which have been set by the compiler in new framework embodying the prophetic view of history. Of similar origin are the two Books of *Kings*, which are a compilation, undertaken in the spirit and tone of Deuteronomy, of various official records, such as 'the Book of the Acts of Solomon' (1 Kings xi. 41) and 'the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel' (seventeen quotations) and of 'Judah' (fifteen quotations). Both *Judges* and *Kings* were probably edited about 600 B.C., the latter closing at first with Josiah's reforms, and afterwards receiving an addition that carried the narrative down into the period of the exile.

VI. JEREMIAH.—In the meantime the last of the pre-exilic prophets had begun to deliver their message. *Zephaniah* seems to have spoken to Jerusalem just before the reformation of Josiah ; while the prophecy of *Nahum*, announcing God's judgment upon Nineveh,

probably belongs to the same period. Nineveh fell in 607 B.C., and the Chaldæan Empire took the place of the Assyrian.

And, even before the discovery of the Law-Book, the ministry of *Jeremiah* had commenced. He was of priestly birth, and a native of Anathoth, not far from Jerusalem; while his labours extended from 'the thirteenth year' (Jer. i. 2) of Josiah to the final destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldæans. Under the successors of Josiah the Kingdom of Judah was reduced to a position of dependence, at first upon Egypt, and afterwards upon the Chaldæan monarchs. Jehoiakim, however, revolted, and Nebuchadnezzar came against him, Jerusalem falling before his troops in 597, when the flower of the population was deported to Babylon. Zedekiah, having sworn allegiance to Nebuchadnezzar, was nominated king over those who remained at Jerusalem. But he broke faith with the Babylonian monarch, and again the Chaldæan army laid siege to the city, reducing it in 586 to a heap of ruins, and carrying its inhabitants into captivity beyond the river Euphrates. Jeremiah had steadfastly proclaimed the duty of submission to the Chaldæan Empire, which he regarded as the instrument of Jehovah's punishment for the sins of His people. His counsel, however, had been scorned as cowardly and unpatriotic, and he had been treated by his own countrymen with ignominy and derision. After undergoing all the horrors of the siege of Jerusalem, he was swept away with a few refugees to Egypt, where tradition says that he met his end by martyrdom.

The earlier utterances of Jeremiah were first written down (Jer. xxxvi. 4) by his scribe Baruch, and after the roll was burnt by Johoiakim its contents were again (Ibid. 27, foll.) dictated by the prophet. The chrono-

logical disorder, however, of his extant prophecies make it probable that they were not collected into their present form until the period of the exile, although it is not unlikely that practically the whole of the book came from his own dictation. He was of a deeply emotional nature, and the pathos of his experiences is reflected in the melancholy cadence of his style. The bitterness of his own spiritual anguish, and at the same time his tender solicitude for his people as he intercedes on their behalf, are frequently apparent; while it is also noticeable that—like many of the true servants of Jehovah—he finds himself in direct opposition (xxiii. 9-40) to other of the prophets who were misleading his country by false hopes and promises. In addition to his rebuke of Jerusalem and his announcement of her impending ruin, he proclaims the desolation of Egypt, Philistia, Moab, Ammon, and Babylon.

The prophet *Habbakuk* was a contemporary of Jeremiah, and probably announced the judgment about to fall upon the Chaldæans shortly before their victory over the Egyptians in 604. Of a rather later date is the prophecy of *Obadiah*, rebuking the vindictive behaviour of the Edomites at the time of the final overthrow of Jerusalem.

CHAPTER V

THE PERIOD OF THE EXILE

THE story of the origin of the Old Testament may be divided broadly into three stages. The first embraces the era of the monarchy, and the second is synchronous with the period of the Babylonian exile; while the third dates from the restoration under Ezra and Nehemiah, and includes the story of the Jewish Canon. Each of these epochs has a distinctive character of its own. The first may be described as 'prophetic,' and the last as 'legal,' the intermediate stage being marked by the systematic formulation of the law and also by the noblest utterance of the prophets. Indeed, the captivity is really the turning-point in the story of the Old Testament, in that it was in Babylon that the spirit of Hebrew Prophecy, at the moment of its greatest triumph, began to be overshadowed by the letter of the Jewish Law.

From the survey that we have already made of the rise of Hebrew literature, it will be evident that so far it has been dominantly prophetic in tone. Our review, of course, has not been exhaustive. The Book of *Ruth*, for example, may well belong to the age of the Monarchy, while the *Song*—which is a lyrical dialogue between Solomon, a Shulamite maiden, and her rustic lover—appears to be a product of the Northern Kingdom

of Israel. And it is undoubted that a section of the *Proverbs* (Prov. x. 1 to xxii. 16), together with some at least of the *Psalms*, date from the same period. Yet the brief sketch which we have attempted to draw has been sufficient to indicate the fact that, up to the period of the captivity, Prophecy is the distinctive feature of the Hebrew writings. Seven of the 'minor' and two of the 'major' prophets have already delivered their message; while more than one record of history has been compiled, and a book of the Law has been written, under the inspiration of a prophetic insight into the significance alike of law and of history. On the other hand, legalism is a thing as yet unknown. Nothing of the Book of Leviticus is in existence, and not much of Numbers, while a considerable portion of Genesis and Exodus is still unborn.

I. EZEKIEL.—The first deportation of captives from Jerusalem took place in 597, eleven years before the final overthrow of the city by the Babylonians. The exiles were settled at Tel-Abib, near the river Chebar, where they formed a not inconsiderable community. Amongst them was *Ezekiel*—a priest—who received his call (Ezek. i. 2) five years after their arrival in the land of captivity, and continued his prophetic ministry among the exiles for over twenty years. His words were received at first with coldness and contempt, till they were vindicated by the actual fall of Jerusalem. Despite the antagonism, however, of his compatriots in exile, Ezekiel fixed his hopes for the future upon them, exhorting them to turn to their fathers' God and remain faithful to His covenant.

The Book of Ezekiel bears throughout the stamp of a single mind. Its style is reflective rather than spontaneous, while the methodical order of his utterances is doubtless due to the fact that they have been

arranged by his own hand. He first announces (Ezek. i. to xxiv.) the approaching destruction of Jerusalem: then he surveys (xxv. to xxxii.) the destiny of several foreign nations, such as Tyre and Egypt: and he closes (xxxiii. to xlvi.) with a prophecy of restoration and a vision of a new Jerusalem, when God Himself will come to dwell amidst His people, and hallow a regenerated nation by His Presence in the Temple.

II. JOB AND LAMENTATIONS.—The experience of the exile brought the Jews face to face with the great problem of suffering. That righteousness is the secret of all prosperity, and that sin will inevitably bring down a judgment, had been the teaching of all the prophets, and from it was drawn the popular conclusion that adversity is always the result of sin. But when a new generation arose in exile and the children found themselves suffering for their fathers' apostasy, new questionings arose among the faithful. Ezekiel (cp. Ezek. xviii.) had already rebuked the popular doctrine. The Book of Job, however, is from first to last an attack upon the theory that suffering is a proof of individual sin. Though it may well be founded upon a basis of tradition, it is in no sense a record of an actual talk between the patriarch and his friends. The figure of Job is merely utilised by the author as the mouthpiece of the struggle of the righteous soul against misfortune. And it is noticeable that in the end Job is pictured as regaining a material prosperity even greater than that which he had enjoyed before.

The book is one of striking originality, alike in form and in matter. It is a dramatic poem, its chief sections being thrown into dialogue, and the action passing through regular stages to its great *dénouement*. In the answer of Jehovah, 'out of the whirlwind' (Job xxxviii.), we have one of the noblest chapters in all

literature. It is practically certain that the speeches of Elihu (xxxii. 1 to xxxvii. 24) are not part of the original poem; their style is different, they disturb the progress of the argument, and the speaker is not mentioned with the others in the prologue (ii. 11), or at the close (xlii. 7-9), as incurring God's displeasure by his folly. These sections were probably added by a later writer, who felt the teaching of the book to be incomplete and unsound.

Another product of the exile is the Book of *Lamentations*, which consists of five independent poems, dealing with the calamities that befel the Jews at the time of the capture of Jerusalem by the Chaldæans. It is, however, very unlikely that Jeremiah is the author of any of them. In each of the first four the verses are arranged alphabetically, and they seem to be all by the same hand and rather earlier in date than the last chapter. Though they breathe a wonderful pathos, they are 'not the unstudied cries of grief,' but rather a series of elaborate dirges, constructed acrostically with much artistic skill and feeling.

III. THE EVANGELICAL PROPHET.—That the last twenty-six chapters attached to the Book of Isaiah are not the work of the great prophet of the monarchy, is a fact which has been already mentioned. The historical situation to which they belong is not the age of Hezekiah, but the period of the Babylonian exile, and they deal throughout with the prospect of restoration. Cyrus, whom the prophet names as the future deliverer of the captives, appeared upon the stage of history about the year 550 B.C. Uniting the various tribes of the Persians, he overthrew the Median Empire in the following year and began the conquest of Western Asia. He captured Sardis, the capital of Lydia, and passing Eastwards eventually took Babylon in 538. In the

following year the exiles received from him permission to return to Palestine.

It is evident that the prophecy of the seer, now known as the '*Deutero-Isaiah*,' belongs to the decade preceding the fall of Babylon. The author strives to arouse the captives from their indifference, showing them that God has not forgotten them, since He has raised up Cyrus as the instrument of their restoration. And he exhorts them to make ready for a response to Jehovah's call by purging themselves from their iniquity, so that they may receive the blessings that are in store for them, and prove themselves the harbingers of a Gospel for all the world.

Nowhere else in the Old Testament do we approach more nearly to the New than in this wonderful utterance. The genius of Hebrew prophecy has here reached its climax. And it is from the recurrent figure of Jehovah's Servant—the ideal representative of the Jewish people—that the author has received the title of 'the Evangelical Prophet.' He points out that a Divine commission has been entrusted to Israel, and that the nation as a whole is intended to be the herald of God's Redemption to the human race. Yet, as the bulk of the people, despite the discipline of its exile, is still blind and deaf to its calling, an Israel arises within Israel, and the true Israel is then personified as the Servant of God, whose vocation will be fulfilled through suffering. Though himself guiltless, this Israelite has passed under the doom of the guilty, and by the strength of his innocence and patience, clinging ever to Jehovah amid scoffs and contempt, he will turn his captivity into a means of carrying light and refreshment to the Gentiles. In this figure we have perhaps the most unique product of Hebrew inspiration, and the Christian Church has always seen in it a portrait of her Founder.

IV. THE SACERDOTAL HISTORY.—The exile was a period of considerable activity in literary affairs, and it saw the final codification of Hebrew law. With the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple not only had the professional occupation of the priesthood come to an end, but there was also a danger that the ceremonial of the sanctuary and its requirements should be forgotten. Soon after the commencement of the exile, therefore, a code was drawn up (Lev. xvii. 1 to xxvi. 46), which is usually described as the '*Law of Holiness*,' in that it lays emphasis on the sanctity, moral as well as ritualistic, which Jehovah demanded of His people. So closely does it resemble the Book of Ezekiel, in tone and principle as well as language, that some have thought it to be the work of the prophet himself. It is more probable, however, that it was completed by a school of writers who gathered round him.

Towards the close of the exile a more extensive work was undertaken by the priesthood. A systematic history of Judaism was composed, tracing the origin of the nation, and describing in detail the chief institutions of the Theocracy. '*The Law of Holiness*' was incorporated into this document, which is generally known as the '*Priest's Code*,' and to it belongs the whole of the Book of Leviticus and a large portion of Numbers, together with considerable sections both of Genesis and Exodus and a part of Joshua. It forms, indeed, the literary basis of the Hexateuch, and its various sections can be abstracted from the extant books and read consecutively as an intelligible whole. It opens with a stately picture of the creation, and passes on to the covenants made with Noah, Abraham, and Israel, preserving throughout a careful regard for chronological sequence and numerical precision. The genealogies of the patriarchs, the measurements of the Ark, the Taber-

nacle, and the camp in the wilderness, are recounted with the accuracy of a statistician; and, while the historical sections are a mere abstract, all the paraphernalia of the ritual law are described in full.

As a history this sacerdotal document differs widely from the prophetic narratives of the pre-exilic age. Whereas the earlier writers are content with throwing the national traditions into the form of a popular story, the priestly record is from first to last the work of an ecclesiastical jurist, constructed with a definite end in view. To the author the affairs of the Judaic hierarchy are the things of supreme interest and importance, and his aim is to trace the origin of all its ceremonial regulations. Of course, the legislation embodied in the sacerdotal code is not the creation of the author. It is based upon the usage of the Temple in the later years of the monarchy, the desire of the writer being simply to draw up a systematic account of the traditions of the priesthood. Interpreting the past in the light of the present, he has but represented the Mosaic age as containing, not merely the germ, but the subsequent developments of the ritual law.

V. HAGGAI, ZECHARIAH, AND MALACHI.—In the year 537 B.C. some 42,000 of the Jewish exiles availed themselves of Cyrus's permission to return to their native land. On arriving at Jerusalem their first task was to rebuild the Temple. Apathy, however, soon hindered the completion of the work, together with the jealousy of the Samaritans and the political unrest consequent on the sudden rise of Darius to the Persian throne. At this juncture two prophets appear, *Haggai* and *Zechariah*. The former had apparently (cp. Hag. ii. 3) seen the Temple with his own eyes before its destruction, and was therefore a man of venerable age when he was called, in 'the second year of Darius the king' (i. 1),

to exhort Zerubbabel and Joshua to complete their task. Zechariah was a younger contemporary of Haggai, and his prophecy belongs the years 520 and 518 B.C., the second (Zech. i. 1, 7) and the fourth (vii. 1) years of Darius' reign. His object also is to stimulate the leaders of the restored community, and in a series of eight visions, each of which is explained by an angel, he tries to arouse and quicken their enthusiasm. The closing chapters of the book, however (Zech. ix. 1 to xiv. 21), are not from the pen of Zechariah, but seem to be the work of an earlier prophet revised some time after the restoration.

The Temple was dedicated in 516. Half a century later Ezra arrived from Babylon, and found the restored exiles in a state of disappointment and indifference. In 445 Nehemiah joined him, and the two men set about a great reform of the Jewish community. Nehemiah, however, had to return to the court of Artaxerxes, and during his absence the old abuses broke out afresh. To this period belongs the prophecy of *Malachi*, which is a rebuke alike of priests and of people for their laxity and slothful negligence. It is possible that the word 'Malachi,' which means 'my messenger' (cp. Mal. iii. 1), is not a proper name at all, and that an anonymous utterance—like the final chapters of Zechariah—has here been added to them and appended to the book of the 'minor' prophets.

VI. EZRA'S BOOK OF THE LAW.—When Ezra reached Jerusalem in 458, he brought with him (cp. Ezra vii. 14, 25) the book of God's Law, which was afterwards read aloud (Neh. viii., ix.) in the audience of the people. This volume was practically identical with the *Pentateuch*, which had been finally compiled during the period of the exile and the half-century that had elapsed since the days of Zerubbabel and Joshua.

Two schools of writers had been at work in Babylon, and their influence is marked by a couple of distinct stages in the process of literary compilation.

The first were the 'Deuteronomic' editors, who gathered together all the documents relating to the pre-exilic history of the Jews. They added to the law-book discovered in Josiah's reign an introduction and an appendix, thus creating the Book of Deuteronomy in its present form. It was then inserted into the prophetic narrative, itself a combination of two documents which had been composed in the period of the early monarchy, and which contained a record of Jewish history up to the conquest of Palestine. On the other hand, the second group of exilic writers was ecclesiastical in character. It was they who codified the Law of Holiness, and afterwards drew up the sacerdotal document, which was an elaborate exposition of all the institutions of the Temple and its worship. And it was at their hands also that the Pentateuch received in the end its present shape. Towards the close of the exile, or perhaps after 'the children of the captivity' had already returned to Jerusalem, the scribes in Babylon pieced together the sacerdotal and prophetic documents, taking the former as their literary framework, and so produced at last that which is called 'The Book of the Law of Moses.'

It may be well to append a conspectus of the stages by which the Pentateuch has reached its present form, and of the approximate date of the documents out of which it has been compiled:—

1. A prophetic narrative, 'J,' based on written as well as oral tradition, was drawn up about 850 in Judah.

2. A similar record, 'E,' was composed in the Kingdom of Israel about 750.

3. After the fall of the Northern Kingdom in 722, the pair were fused together by a redactor, 'JE,' about a generation later.

4. In 621 the major part of the Book of Deuteronomy, 'D,' was found in the Temple.

5. The Law of Holiness, 'H,' was drawn up in the earlier years of the exile; and about the same time the prophetical narrative was combined, 'JED,' with Deuteronomy.

6. A sacerdotal record of the Theocracy, 'P,' was composed at the close of the exile, the Law of Holiness being incorporated in it.

7. Lastly, about the time of the return of the Jews from captivity, 'JED' and 'P' were welded together, the sacerdotal narrative being taken as the groundwork of the whole.

CHAPTER VI

THE GROWTH OF THE JEWISH CANON

THE Hebrew Canon of Holy Writ is not in every respect identical with the Old Testament of the English Church. While its contents are the same, it places the various books in an order different from that with which we are familiar. For the Jews divide their Bible into three parts, to which respectively they give the names of 'The Law,' 'The Prophets,' and 'The Writings.' The 'Torah'—or Law—is the Pentateuch. The Prophets—'Nebiim'—are subdivided into two groups, the former including those historical books which reflect the characteristic doctrine of the prophets, while the latter embraces the writings ascribed to Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the minor seers. The third section—'Kethubim'—is of a more miscellaneous character, and is again differentiated into groups, the first being mainly poetical in character, the second containing the five 'Megilloth'—or Rolls—which were appointed to be read at certain seasons in the synagogue, and the third being composed of some of the latest of the sacred writings. The following shows the general scheme of the Jewish Canon :

1. *The Law*, consisting of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

2. *The Prophets*, embracing (a) *histories*—Joshua,

Judges, Samuel, and Kings; and (b) *orations*—Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve minor seers.

3. *The Writings*, including (a) the Psalms, Proverbs, and Job; (b) the Song, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Esther; and (c) Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles.

Now, the interest of this method of arrangement is that in outline it represents the stages by which the Jewish Canon was gradually formed. It indicates the order, not of the original composition of the various books, but of the historic process by which they came to be acknowledged as possessing a divine authority. For we should always remember that a considerable interval of time must necessarily elapse between the actual origin of any document and its formal recognition as an integral element in Holy Writ. None of the utterances of the prophets, for example, were hailed as 'Scripture' by their contemporaries. Indeed, the very idea of a Bible, as a collection of inspired writings, is itself a thing of growth, involving the existence of an extensive literature and of a community prepared to draw a distinction between that which is sacred and profane. When certain books had proved their own value, and been found to bear a special and unique character, the verdict of popular experience was ratified by an ecclesiastical pronouncement. Canonicity, in short, is an instance of 'the survival of the fittest' in literature, the general sentiment of the Jews about their various writings being afterwards re-enforced by an official decree. And the formulation of the Hebrew Canon is clearly marked by three stages, corresponding to the tripartite division of its contents.

I. THE LAW.—The story really begins with the work of Ezra. Before his time, however, there is one event which is of capital importance, constituting as it

does a landmark in the history of the Old Testament. 'The Book of the Law,' discovered in the Temple during the reign of Josiah, was immediately seen to be of Divine significance, and upon its basis the king inaugurated reformation. Now, this was a new phenomenon in Jewish history. Hitherto appeal had never been made to a book. Neither judge, nor king, nor prophet had invoked the name of Moses as an author, or based their exhortations to loyalty and righteousness upon any Scriptural authority. Even in Hezekiah's reign—less than a century before that of Josiah—the attempt at reform which the king had made under the inspiration of Isaiah, had not been supported by any direct reference to a Bible. Indeed, there is no evidence that the Jews were aware that they possessed writings of a distinctively 'Biblical' character until a much later period. And the reason why the Law-Book of Josiah was regarded as authoritative directly after its discovery, lay in the fact that its contents were not altogether unknown, the volume being a popular exposition, couched in prophetic language, of statutes and ordinances with many of which the nation was already more or less familiar. The influence of the book, however, was felt by individuals rather than by the people as a whole. Jeremiah, as we have seen, was deeply affected both by its letter and its spirit, together with the revisers of more than one of the historical records. But there can be little doubt that it was not generally acknowledged as 'canonical.' The living utterance of the prophets rightly took precedence over written oracles, and the idea of canonicity was yet unborn. It was not until the voice of prophecy had practically come to an end, after Haggai and Zechariah had exhorted the children of the captivity to rebuild the

Temple at Jerusalem, that the first Canon was definitely settled and proclaimed.

Ezra, when he returned from Babylon to set in order the affairs of the restored community, waited for a while, trying to arouse the interest and enthusiasm of the people, so as to insure a permanent success to his undertaking. Thirteen years later Nehemiah arrived as governor of Jerusalem, and with his assistance Ezra arranged for a public recitation of the Law-Book which he had brought with him. This volume was the Pentateuch, the promulgation of which in 444 marks the commencement of the Hebrew Canon. To the majority of the people at Jerusalem it was a new publication. Since the return from Babylon, nearly a century ago, the Book of Deuteronomy had been their only Bible, while the knowledge of its contents was almost confined to the official priesthood. But now an important change had taken place. The Law was put into the hands of the people, and the monopoly of knowledge among the hierarchy had come to an end. Authority had now to declare, not the contents, but the meaning of the Book of God. The office of teacher, which had hitherto been identified with that of priest, began to be assumed by the scribe, who found a sphere for the exercise of his profession in the synagogues that now began to arise, not only in Judæa, but throughout the whole of the Dispersion. Thus the work of Ezra and Nehemiah marks the beginning of a new régime. The nation had definitely been transformed into a church. The Jews felt themselves to be a holy congregation, cut off from the world by a Divine Law and Covenant, which was the common treasure of the multitude. The foundation-stone of Judaism was laid.

The 'Law' was never deposed from its position of supreme dignity. From the days of Ezra onwards it

formed the basis of the popular religion. In the synagogues the lections were for a considerable time taken only from the Pentateuch, and when an extract from the Prophets was afterwards appointed, it was used merely to illustrate the Law. The veneration in which the first Canon was universally regarded is also indicated by the fact that it was the only section of the Hebrew Scriptures which was ever acknowledged by the schismatical community at Samaria.

II. THE PROPHETS.—After the death of Nehemiah a thick curtain falls upon the history of Judæa for over 200 years. For a century it remained dependent upon the Persian Court. Then, after Alexander the Great had appeared in 332 B.C. as the conqueror of the East, and the Greek Empire had practically taken the place of the Persian, the Jews passed for 100 years under the rule of the Ptolemies of Egypt, and afterwards of the Seleucid dynasty of Syria. During these centuries of subjection they became more and more self-centred and exclusive, and the prophetic ideal of religion died away. The Book of *Joel*, which probably belongs to the Persian epoch, lacks the moral earnestness of the earlier seers, and borrows largely from their writings. *Jonah* also dates from the same period. It is not a history, but rather a didactic narrative, doubtless based upon ancient tradition, in which the author makes a last appeal to his compatriots to believe in the all-embracing Mercy of Jehovah.

At what time, then, were 'the Prophets' recognised as an integral part of the Hebrew Bible? The minor seers appear to have been collected into a single volume some time before they were treated as canonical, and it is unlikely that the collection was made until the Persian Empire had fallen before the Greeks. During the Hellenic period the writings of all the prophets gradually

rose in popular estimation. The spread of Greek culture made the Jews glad to point out the excellencies of their literature to the Gentile world, while they themselves began to study the prophetic utterances with greater care. It was not, however, until the close of the third century before Christ that the second stage was reached in the formation of the Canon. About the year 250, the Septuagint—or Greek version of the Old Testament—was begun at Alexandria; for the Jews of the Western Dispersion were now largely ‘Hellenistic,’ or of Greek speech, and required a translation of their Scriptures. At first the Pentateuch alone was rendered, the prophetic books not being translated until later: but the Septuagint indicates that its version of ‘the Prophets’ was completed before they had become canonical at Jerusalem. On the other hand, the prologue to the Apocryphal Ecclesiasticus, which was written about 190 B.C., shows that by that time not only ‘the Law and the Prophets,’ but also some of the other writings, were regarded as Scripture. Hence it is probable that shortly before 200—possibly in the days of the high priest Simon II.—the second Canon was formally settled, and ‘the Prophets’ began to rank definitely as Holy Writ, inferior of course to ‘the Law,’ but superior to all the rest of Jewish literature.

Meanwhile a varied literature was gradually accumulating. In all probability the Book of *Psalms* contains many poems that date from the monarchy, and a few that come even from the pen of David. As a whole, however, the Psalter is truly described as ‘the Hymn-book of the Second Temple,’ its contents being of varied date and for the most part posterior to the exile, the latest collection not being made until the Maccabæan period. *Proverbs* was completed under the Persian Empire, the original collection being enriched by the

addition of sundry other groups of ethical dicta. *Esther* seems to have been written at the commencement of the Greek period, and gives a dramatic presentation of the origin of the feast of Purim. Of a still later date are the two Books of *Chronicles*, which form one volume in the Hebrew Canon, as is also the case with their sequel, the Books of *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*. The quartette really constitutes a single work, probably from the pen of a Levite, who has incorporated into his treatise extracts from the authentic memoirs both of Ezra and Nehemiah, and refers to a large number of other sources of information. The aim of the compiler is manifestly to sketch the history of Judah, with special reference to the Levitical priesthood and the Temple. Lastly, the Book of *Ecclesiastes*, which is a product of the same age, presents the reflections of a man of the world upon human action and its consequences. The author was the critic as well as the sage of his generation; and, though voicing here and there a note of real enthusiasm, he is more often content with maxims of a utilitarian prudence, degenerating at times into the gloom of a universal pessimism.

With the exception of the Book of Daniel and the latest additions to the Psalter, the rest of the Old Testament was now composed. But, before passing to the final stage in the evolution of the Canon, it is well to consider the significance of that which already has been reached. At the close of the third century it is possible that other writings beside those embraced under 'the Law and the Prophets' were regarded as sacred, such as some of the Psalms and Proverbs; yet they were not allowed to usurp the dignity of their elders. Even when a third portion of Jewish literature began to be canonised by the admission of the Psalter, 'the Law and the Prophets' remained distinctive and supreme.

If in the synagogues a lection was now regularly taken from the prophetic books, not until several centuries after the birth of our Lord were any other writings systematically used in local worship. Thus the influence of the second step in the formation of the Canon lasted into the Christian era. In the New Testament the most common designation of the Jewish Bible—after the conventional title of ‘the Scriptures’—is everywhere ‘the Law and the Prophets’ (v. St. Matt. vii. 12; St. Luke xvi. 29, 31, xxiv. 27; St. John i. 45; Rom. iii. 21); while at times the term ‘Law’ is used to cover the whole of the canonical writings (cp. St. John x. 34, xii. 34, xv. 25; 1 Cor. xiv. 21).

III. THE WRITINGS.—The Maccabæan revolt brought a fresh breath of life to the Jews. In 168 the Greek ruler of Syria had captured Jerusalem, and begun to stamp out Judaism by force, erecting a pagan altar in the court of the Temple, and selling into slavery those who refused to submit. An echo of the sufferings of the faithful is heard in some of the latest Psalms, such as the 44th, 74th, and 79th. Within a year, however, the standard of rebellion was unfurled by the heroic family of the Maccabees, and by a series of brilliant victories the Jews were raised to a position of political independence, which they enjoyed for over a century. Out of the heart of the struggle, when Judas had twice defeated the Syrian troops and was awaiting the invasion of a larger army, the Book of *Daniel* was born. It was intended as an encouragement to the Jews in their strike for national freedom. Not only do its doctrines of angels, a resurrection, and a judgment represent a more developed type of theology than that of the older prophets, but its standpoint is more comprehensive and more definite. The author represents Daniel, who had lived through the last great crisis in the national

history, as surveying the future conflicts between the world and the Church, and declaring the final triumph of God's Kingdom. He outlines, in short, 'a religious philosophy of history.' He surveys (Dan. vii., foll.) the sequence of the four empires—viz., the Chaldæan, the Median, the Persian, and the Greek—and declares that they are destined to be overthrown by the Messiah and the Kingdom of His saints. The unflinching intensity of his faith, combined with the fact that his prediction was directly verified by the fall of the tyrant and the removal of 'the abomination that maketh desolate' (xi. 31) from the sanctuary, secured for him an immediate recognition as a man inspired of God.

The Maccabæan episode also resulted in a further step in the formation of the Canon. During the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes the worship of the Temple had been suppressed for three years; and the popular use of the Psalter during this period, in which the suffering people discovered afresh in their liturgical poetry a genuine inspiration, was probably that which led to its canonisation soon after the Temple was again dedicated (cp. St. John x. 22) to Jehovah. With the Psalms came a miscellany of writings, some of which may have been appended to 'the Law and the Prophets' since the beginning of the second century. Between the years 161 and 135 B.C.—in the days of Jonathan and Simon Maccabæus—the Proverbs, Job, Ruth, Lamentations, Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah seem to have been formally admitted to the Canon. Thus the basis of its last division was laid.

The story of the Hebrew Bible, however, did not end until the dawn of the Christian era. While the vast majority of 'the Writings' were held to be canonical about a hundred years before the birth of Jesus Christ, objections were raised against the others for a consider-

able time. The Song, for example, is quite as poetical as the Book of Job. Yet its character as a frankly human romance formed a difficulty with many of the orthodox custodians of Holy Writ. Its ascription to Solomon, however, was probably that which eventually secured its admission, as was also the case with the Book of Ecclesiastes. Esther, too, was long regarded with disfavour, in that God is never mentioned in its pages, and it is concerned with the origin of a feast which was not mentioned in the Law. Chronicles, however, seems to have been acknowledged shortly after the histories of Ezra and Nehemiah, as it could easily be seen to be their preface. It was evidently the last book of the Canon in the time of our Lord, as He appealed to the entire story of the Scriptures, from the fourth chapter of Genesis to the second volume of Chronicles, as a record of innocent martyrdom—‘from the blood of the righteous Abel to the blood of Zecharias, the son of Barachias’ (St. Matt. xxiii. 35)—and declared that it would be required of that generation.

And it was the historic fulfilment of His words, when Jerusalem fell in 70 A.D. before the Roman eagles, that led to the ultimate settlement of the Canon. For the worship of the Temple was now finally abolished, the scribes and Pharisees had been slaughtered or scattered abroad, and Judaism was but a decapitated trunk. It was more needful than ever to preserve the Scriptures with the greatest care. The Hellenistic Jews—who had their own Bible in the Septuagint—were far more numerous than the Jews in Palestine; and if the Hebrew Canon was not to be overridden and eclipsed by the Greek version, its contents must be fixed authoritatively once for all. A Council was therefore held at Jamnia, about 90 A.D., at which certain scruples about Esther and Ecclesiastes were overruled. And though

little is known of the details of its procedure, the conference may be taken as the official close of the Canon. The process which had been begun by Ezra, more than five centuries ago, was now finally complete. And if it can truly be described as the deliberate result of the consciousness of the Jewish Church, it can also be as justly attributed to the unfailing Providence of God.

CHAPTER VII

LOSS OR GAIN?

THE general verdict of the Higher Criticism has now been passed briefly in review, and it is possible to take stock of the situation and to estimate the prospect that lies before us. What is the result which an acquaintance with the critical position will produce upon the populace as a whole? Has the influence of modern criticism so far been beneficial to religion or the reverse? Is it likely to bring a loss or a gain?

It may be said, of course, that such a question is premature, in that it assumes a consensus of critical opinion which does not at present exist. Yet those who are inclined to advocate a waiting policy, on the ground of general uncertainty as to the positions which criticism will ultimately substantiate, do not appear to recognise the magnitude of what has already been done. The critics have been subject to much misrepresentation. A prejudice has been raised against them by depicting their attitude as one of general hostility to religion, and also by exaggerating beyond all warrant their minor differences of view. To put the query, 'What are "the assured results" of criticism?' to speak of the Hebrew scholars as being engaged in an internecine combat among themselves, and to dismiss them with the remark that, when they have ended their

own disputes and quarrels, it may be worth while to listen to what they have to say, is really to throw dust in the eyes of the Christian public. It is, of course, a truism that experts will always disagree. With regard to the minutiae of critical scholarship, it is not to be expected that the judgment of every worker will exactly coincide with that of all his predecessors. Indeed, if all critics were always at one, there would be an end of criticism. But in reference to the Old Testament the variations of critical opinion, taken as a whole, are concerned with points which are unimportant for the general reader as distinguished from the Hebrew student. On many subsidiary matters the last word certainly has not been uttered. Yet the broad basis of criticism has now been laid, and the general outlines of the development of Hebrew literature have been ascertained and established. The unanimity of the experts with regard to the main position is so impressive, that the ordinary reader can afford to overlook their differences.

Nevertheless, the application of the critical verdict to the popular interpretation of the Old Testament is not altogether an easy task. While any information is welcome as to the date and authorship of the various books, we have to pause before we draw our practical corollary. If the introductory chapters of Genesis, for example, are now known to contain the efforts of the Hebrew imagination to explain the origin of all things, are we therefore entitled to speak of them as 'a collection of untrue myths'? And if the historical authenticity of the figures and incidents of the patriarchal age cannot be substantiated, is the book itself a hopelessly misleading document? If such occurrences as the plagues of Egypt and the crossing of the Red Sea and the Jordan can be seen to be due to natural causes,

is it no longer true that God Himself led His people out of bondage into the promised land? If sundry books which have been long held to have been written by Moses or Job or Daniel, are known to have been composed by others belonging to a later day, are we to say that these productions are 'impudent and dishonest forgeries'? If the beliefs and institutions of the Hebrews bear a resemblance to those of their Semitic neighbours, is there nothing which is really unique in their religion? And if the utterances of the prophets can be seen to refer to contemporary facts and persons, is there no prophecy of our Lord in the Old Testament?

Such questions are but samples of many. To each of the above the reply is a clear negative; yet the validity of the answer will not be equally apparent to all, since it must depend upon the intellectual temperament of the individual and his outlook upon things in general, quite as much as upon his acquaintance with the Hebrew Scriptures and with the critical account of their origin. And it is just here, in the realm of mental presuppositions, that a difficulty arises which is really formidable. Mingled inextricably with the subject of the Higher Criticism of the Bible lies a series of other topics, which must profoundly affect its popular exegesis. The interpreter of Holy Writ has not only to consider questions of literary scholarship, but also to estimate their bearing on historical problems and the light which they throw on the general method and content of Revelation. All that is connoted by the term 'supernatural' comes immediately into view, together with the infinite variety of current opinion upon such subjects as Inspiration, Miracle, and Prophecy; ranging from the traditional theory of Biblical infallibility to the latest *réchauffé* of secular rationalism.

Criticism is not, of course, itself a product of the modern mind. It is a branch of ordinary scholarship, dealing with the facts supplied by the documents of the Old Testament itself, and formulating by degrees the story of its birth. But, in the Providence of God, the critical process in reference to the Old Testament blossomed out and began to bear definite fruit just at the period which saw the rise of modern thought. During the latter half of last century there took place an intellectual revolution unparalleled in the world's history. The age of Copernicus and Galileo is not to be compared in importance with that of Darwin, because the latter is but the most famous name amid a galaxy of distinguished men, whose work in various departments of physical science has produced a new world of thought; while the arrival of popular education has broken down the barrier which used to withhold the multitude from the circle of secluded culture. It is not merely that we are now aware of a large number of facts of which we were ignorant until lately, such as the distance of the nearest star, the unity of all physical forces, or the origin of man. Our mental attitude as a whole has been altered, our brains are being equipped with a new stock of furniture, and the process of enlightenment is being carried far afield by education and the press. The 'psychological climate' of humanity has changed, and we breathe an atmosphere quite different from that of our grandfathers. Here is the real crux of the situation. The Higher Criticism of the Bible, though not the direct offspring of modern thought, may justly be described as a collateral relative. And our attitude to its verdict is largely dependent upon the extent to which we have been already influenced by the manifold agencies of modern enlightenment.

Hence the popularisation of the critical verdict will not produce the same effect in all quarters. To some it will undoubtedly involve a loss. Many of the older generation, who have been accustomed to regard the Bible as the direct Script of Heaven, are bound to feel distress on learning that the form of their convictions has been abandoned by the present leaders of Christian thought. And others, too, who have never learnt that change is the law of life, and that truth which has ceased to be progressive

‘Hath lost hold on God,’

will be made restless and suspicious by the progress of critical knowledge among the people. Traditions of the past upon the one hand, and intellectual disposition upon the other, may frequently hinder a ready appreciation of the advantages of modern criticism, and in such cases the loss at first will be genuine.

It may therefore be asked whether, in view of the fact that some Christian souls may be discomfited by the process, it is really the duty of the Christian Church to attempt to popularise the broad outlines of criticism. No one who studies the New Testament can fail to remember that, while our Lord could be stern towards the leaders of Church and State, He was always tender to women and children, and full of consideration for the weak and the outcast and the poor. Nor can the teacher forget the stern and awful denunciation which He pronounced upon those who make any of ‘the little ones who believe’ on Him to stumble. To disregard the feelings of others and wantonly to disturb their convictions is a sign of heartlessness and folly. Nevertheless, the warning not to cause offence to the little ones is not the only warning in the New Testament. Our Lord had often to rebuke His disciples

for their lack of insight and their failure to comprehend the progressive revelation that He was laying open before them. And His words contain an eloquent caution for all the generations of the Christian Church, in that they depict in parable the future progress of truth in God's Kingdom. He was constantly inculcating (St. Matt. xxv., etc.) the duty of being vigilant and wide awake, and explained the meaning of His exhortation (St. Matt. xxiv. 42, foll. ; St. Luke xii. 35-48) by saying that 'the faithful and wise steward' would be the one who gave to his lord's household 'their portion of food in due season'; while He added (St. Matt. xiii. 52) that His disciples would prove themselves to be intelligent by bringing forth out of their treasure 'things new' as well as old. All our personal apprehension of the Gospel must be progressive, and grow with our own mental and spiritual growth. And just as the individual advances from truth to truth in his own grasp of the mysteries of the Kingdom, so, too, Christendom is gradually mastering the meaning of its faith, since the full-orbed truth of the Gospel is not yet all revealed, and its interpretation is constantly taking fresh form and colouring in the kaleidoscope of history. As we look back, we can perceive that each of the great movements of human thought has brought again into prominence some neglected aspect of Christian doctrine, and contributed something of value to the interpretation of the Catholic faith. And if we are able to believe that each of them has been verily an Advent of the Son of Man, we shall be able to see Him 'coming in the clouds' of modern unrest and bewilderment and illumination, and to take courage at the sight.

Hence, we believe that God is with us, and we feel that to refuse to face the critical situation is to be heedless of the warning to 'discern the signs of the

times.' We are not intended to be catering always for the 'babes' of God's Household. If the first charge given to the great Apostle was to 'feed' the 'lambs,' it was followed by a twofold order to 'tend' and then to 'feed' the 'sheep.' The adults of the flock have a claim to be considered, while it ought also to be the constant aim of the teacher to prepare the coming generation for that which is awaiting it. Acknowledging with respect the position of those who require 'the sincere milk of the Word,' rather than 'the strong meat' that 'belongs to grown men,' we must deal impartially with both alike. A period of transition, such as that through which we are now passing, involves many obvious difficulties. But the interests of the Church and of religion demand that the character of the present age should be openly recognised, and that men should not be allowed to forget that they are living in the twentieth century. We cannot afford to wait indefinitely before commencing to promulgate the results of the scientific study of the last fifty years. Even as it is the Church has lost much by refusing to state in public that her standpoint in reference to the Old Testament has changed. And if from fear of producing friction or disturbance she still continues to keep silence, she will find herself deserted more and more by the adolescent members of her flock. After all,

'He is the true conservative
Who lops the withered branch away,'

and it is surely time that the accredited teachers of religion should make it clear that they are not wedded to opinions which have long been obsolete. We are not called upon to be purely negative in our teaching, but to be always positive at the same time, pointing out how an acquaintance with the historical origin of the Old Testament brings life and force back into the

study and exposition of Holy Writ. If our policy is tactful and constructive, and above all if it is obviously sincere, we need have no misgivings whatsoever about the result. Some loss in some few cases may ensue, but it will be far more than counterbalanced by the gain. Not only for the coming generation, but for that of the present day, the benefit that will accrue from an acquaintance with the work of criticism can hardly be exaggerated.

For what is the existing state of Christian opinion? It is constantly forgotten that there is much disquietude already about the Old Testament. Ecclesiastical officials may perhaps hear but little of it; for questionings are often smothered in their presence, as they are supposed by many to feel that inquiry is irreverent and that doubt is sinful. Yet the ordinary reader, though he may not often give expression to his sentiments, finds in the Hebrew Scriptures an immense number of difficulties, which are not satisfactorily resolved by the traditional methods of interpretation, and which often tend to create in his mind a positive disinclination for further study. That the world was really made in six days, for example, is a statement that very few persons are now able to accept; while the not uncommon explanation, that the 'days' of the creation represent 'vast periods of time,' is immediately seen to be futile in view of the fact that the Sabbath of divine appointment was an actual period of twenty-four hours. Nor is it at all easy to believe that the water was really heaped up on either side of the Israelites in the Red Sea, that sun and moon really stood still at the word of Joshua, or that Elisha really made the iron to swim. Scientific and historical difficulties, however, though found in abundance in the Old Testament, do not constitute so serious an obstacle as the ethical dilemmas

that are contained within its pages. Those who read the Bible in order to discover in it something of God's message to the human race can perhaps afford to pass by a stumbling-block belonging to the realm of physics, but not those which are encountered in the sphere of morality. That God should command a man to slay his son, that He should prefer the deceitful Jacob to the generous Esau, and that He should applaud the treachery of Jael and the atrocities of a war of extermination, are facts that challenge, not only the intellect, but the conscience of the Christian reader; while the tone of such a book as Ecclesiastes, or the imprecations contained in the Psalter and its doctrine about the future life, send a shudder through our moral sense, and are felt to be retrograde and disheartening. Amid much that is beautiful in the Old Testament, the ordinary reader often meets with that which is unlovely, and he is chilled and depressed by the presence of the latter in proportion to the intensity of his desire to find in Holy Writ a source of moral refreshment and illumination.

Now, if such stumbling-blocks are allowed to remain, the consequences may be extremely serious. Nothing is fraught with greater peril to religion than a divorce between it and the best moral consciousness of the day. A Church which is true to its Master may find itself deserted by those 'Grecians' who refuse to bend the knee before the Son of Man, because they regard 'the Wisdom and the Power of God' (1 Cor. i. 23, 24) as 'foolishness.' But a parlous state of affairs has arrived when men of blameless character, filled with an enthusiasm for humanity and social justice, look askance upon the popular religion, because it presents for their adoration a Deity Whose actions are felt to be immoral, or at least below the level of the loftiest ideal. And, in addi-

tion to the danger of losing the co-operation of noble souls, the Church cannot without grave peril leave in the minds of her faithful members the least suspicion of a conflict between her doctrine and the dictates of morality. Fatal indeed it is to think, or to allow men to feel, that God's Morality was once defective, that His actions in olden time require an apology to the modern conscience, and that we are rather ashamed nowadays of the Hebrew ethic. The spiritual chaos that results from refusing to hallow the Moral Character of God, and representing Him as an Autocrat dispensed from the obligations of the moral law, bears a disastrous fruit alike in national and in personal history.

It is not, therefore, by silence that the Church will make good her appeal to the modern world. Nor will she succeed in allaying the sense of ethical discomfort among her members by strained methods of interpretation, but only by a policy of regular and systematic exposition that starts frankly from the critical platform. Much of the religious unrest of to-day, and not a little of its open unbelief, is due to the lack of any effort on the part of the teachers of religion to deal openly with the difficulties of the Old Testament. Criticism has been said to be responsible for the creation of modern scepticism. But it would be far more just to remark that many a man has become a sceptic through his lack of acquaintance with the critical interpretation of the Bible. Brought up on some stilted theory of Inspiration, and expected to believe that the Old Testament is the literal and verbal utterance of God, he soon begins to find himself at war with the traditional ideas of his boyhood. His intellect awakens, and he becomes aware of many historical discrepancies and scientific blunders in the Hebrew Scriptures, while his moral sense chafes more and more at their ethical pronounce-

ments. In proportion to his own honesty, he refuses to slur over his difficulties or to pretend that they are non-existent. And unless they are satisfactorily removed, he acquires a distaste for the volume in which they are found, because he is at a loss to see in what sense it can be the record of genuine Revelation. Abandoning the study of the Bible, by degrees he also abandons any living interest in religion, and drifts slowly but surely towards a practical agnosticism. It is no exaggeration to affirm that thousands of souls, who have never become acquainted with any other than the traditional interpretation of the Old Testament, have through their ignorance of criticism made shipwreck of their faith.

And alongside of this familiar tragedy, the Old Testament is passing into popular disuse. Not only have many ceased to read it as a moral instructor, but those who are responsible for teaching others are full of hesitation as to the procedure which they should adopt. Parents are disinclined to tell its stories to their children, public-school masters fight shy of it in their Scriptural lessons, and teachers in elementary schools and classes for Biblical study are finding themselves more and more perplexed. Everywhere a feeling of uneasiness is apparent, and not least among the members of the Church's ministry. It is not too much to say that, owing to a general sense of insecurity, many a pulpit in England passes over large tracts of the Hebrew Bible in comparative silence, and so keeps many a rich field of pasturage closed to the hungry members of the flock.

Hence the call for a method of Biblical exegesis which will no longer confuse the letter with the spirit of Holy Writ, is one that cannot brook delay. Nor can any wide response be made until the unrealities of

convention have been dissipated from our midst by a general acquaintance with the work of modern criticism. We can with confidence predict an inestimable advantage to religion as resulting from the presentation of the critical verdict to the people. It will reinstate the Old Testament to the intellect and the conscience of the modern world; it will bring back vitality into its popular interpretation, and remove the veil which has so long hidden its imperishable message from the eyes of the Christian reader. For many a century the Hebrew Scriptures have been encased in a mechanical framework. An air of artificiality surrounds them, thwarting every attempt to understand them, both in public and private. This scaffolding erected by human wit around the fabric of the Old Testament is so dense, that it has almost shrouded from view the ancient temple of God's Wisdom. And the great task of modern criticism has been to take down the woodwork, and to reveal to the gaze of the student the majestic proportions of the inner fane. Some may tremble lest the structure be unable to stand alone. But their fears are groundless; while, in place of an unsightly array of poles and platforms, the critics are summoning the Christian world to behold for the first time an edifice of mighty strength and surpassing beauty.

For that which the Higher Criticism has done is to restore the historical perspective to the Old Testament. The figures of Hebrew history no longer move in a world of shadows, but are seen to be clothed in flesh and blood, and subject to like passions as ourselves. And the unique character of the moral insight vouchsafed to their prophets can be recognised as the feature that distinguishes the Old Testament from all the literatures of antiquity, and marks it out as an inspired

volume, converting it into a key to the interpretation alike of national history and of personal experience. Thus, the result of the gradual promulgation of the critical verdict will be to produce a feeling of security and courage in place of the present disquietude. Historical testimony has for the modern world a force that is denied to the pronouncements of an *a priori* dogmatism. So long as belief rests upon some traditional authority, the mind will be haunted by the doubt whether the authority itself can bear the solvent of modern thought. But when convictions have been tested, when they are themselves the result of investigation, and when their form is based upon the evidence of historical criticism, doubt will vanish like the morning mist before the sun, and the mind be filled with a radiant buoyancy and freedom. Once treat the Bible 'like any other book,' once bring it out of the gloom of artificial abstractions into the broad daylight of common-sense, and it will become to every reader a divine as well as a human volume, palpitating with vital issues for to-day.

But, of course, there is much need for patience. The method by which the secret of the Old Testament is to be elicited, and its message interpreted to the modern world, can only be discovered by slow degrees. Criticism has placed new implements in our hands; but time will be required before we can learn how to use them, and to make them effective in the cause of religion. Yet it is encouraging to note that the work is now proceeding apace, and that the field is being ploughed by many workers. In England, Scotland, and America, as well as in other lands, commentators are following in the wake of the critics, and showing us something of the fruit which is to be gathered from a critical interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures. Already it is

evident that the harvest will exceed all anticipation, and many a commentary stands beckoning us onward to patient thought and study. Gradually the Old Testament is being given back to us, habitable at last to the modern intellect, and stimulative to the moral sense beyond the range of our loftiest aspirations.

On the threshold, however, there are several topics, not belonging to any book in particular, but affecting rather the substance of the Old Testament as a whole, which seem to demand a special treatment. Inspiration, Miracle, and Prophecy are three subjects of general importance, about which there is much diversity of opinion and not a little vagueness and misunderstanding. Each would require a volume in itself for its adequate presentation, so that it will only be possible to suggest the barest outline of their significance. The following pages are an attempt to indicate a few points that seem worthy of consideration, and aim at showing, by sundry hints and illustrations, that the critical estimate of the Old Testament involves an obvious gain.

CHAPTER VIII

INSPIRATION AND EXEGESIS

WHEN Locke the philosopher was asked what he meant by Biblical inspiration, his answer was, 'Si non rogas, intelligo' (If you do not ask, I understand). And his reply was far more than a clever retort. The inspiration of the Old Testament is a thing of which no candid reader can fail to be conscious, while he finds it extremely difficult to specify and define its nature. And as it is essentially a spiritual fact, it seems to court an appeal to the general consciousness as being the evidence of a sympathetic relation. Nevertheless, it is impossible to rest content with a purely individualistic answer. The sentiment of the reader is too precarious a witness on which to build the edifice of a corporate faith. Something at least which is objective must be adduced, though its validity, of course, will be dependent upon the extent of the reader's sympathy.

It is a fact, of which many are unaware, that the Catholic Church has never formulated any explicit doctrine of inspiration. Individual teachers have frequently alluded to it, and sometimes written about it at considerable length. Yet the subject—like that of the Atonement and many other fundamental truths—is not one of those about which the Church has been led to make a dogmatic pronouncement. Beyond the bare

statement that the Holy Ghost 'spake by the Prophets,' there is nothing in the Catholic creeds which specifically refers to the inspiration of the Bible. What the Church has done in reference to the Old Testament has simply been to receive it from the hands of her Jewish predecessor, and to cherish it as her most valued inheritance, without specifying anything about the precise character of its contents. She has not even formally defined their limits. It must be remembered that the Bible to which our Lord had appealed was the Hebrew Canon; while the majority of the earliest Jewish converts were drawn from the Hellenistic dispersion, which had its own Bible in the Greek translation of the Old Testament. Into this Septuagint Version the Hellenistic Jews had introduced by degrees a number of additional writings, which are now known as 'the Apocrypha.' And for some time, especially among the Gentile Churches, the Christians seem to have regarded the Apocrypha, and other writings also, as constituting part of the sacred literature of the Jews. Towards the close of the second century a division began to be made between them and the Scriptures which had already received the official imprimatur of the Jewish Church. In the West of Christendom, however, the Apocrypha gradually rose in ecclesiastical esteem, until the Council of Trent affirmed the canonicity of the greater number, and since the Reformation they have been regarded more favourably by Catholic than by Protestant theologians, the reformed communities reverting, as a rule, to the ancient Canon of the Hebrews. In England our Reformers accepted the judgment of the Jewish Rabbis, but arranged the books in a different order.

Canonicity, however, does not settle anything about the nature of inspiration: it only registers the prevailing opinion as to the actual books which are inspired.

It was because the various writings of the Old Testament were already held to be sacred by the Jewish people, that they came by degrees to be canonised by the authority of the Jewish Church. And the first attempt to devise a theory of inspiration was made during the centuries immediately preceding the Christian era, when a hard crust of legalism was gradually forming itself around 'the oracles of God,' and bringing in its train a general paralysis of religion. Just as by arranging their Scripture in the wrong order the Rabbinic schools managed to fasten upon the Old Testament a seal which remained unbroken until the rise of modern criticism, so, too, their doctrine about inspiration has exercised a baneful influence upon the methods of popular interpretation down to the present day. The scribes and Pharisees were not content with inculcating the unhistorical tradition that the Pentateuch was the work of Moses; they taught that God Himself was the Author of the Law. In short, 'the Law' was to orthodox Judaism the work of God, just in the same sense that 'Paradise Lost' is the work of Milton. Prophecy also was identified by the Pharisees with mere soothsaying, and was studied only for the sake of finding in it predictions of a glorious future for the Jewish race. Everywhere a rigid and formal view of inspiration prevailed, blotting out the personality of the various authors of Holy Writ, and reducing them to a series of mechanical instruments. The truth, that God had spoken to their fathers, was distorted by the Rabbis into the falsehood that He had dictated the actual language which the authors of their Scriptures were to employ, and that they had simply been His passive amanuenses.

Now, the influence of this artificial method of treatment passed necessarily into the Christian Church.

However great be the change of character and mental outlook involved in a man's conversion to faith in Christ, it will not obliterate all vestiges of his former self. The Apostle to the Gentiles, for example, shows in his references to the Old Testament more than one trace of an allegorical literalism which is clearly due to his Rabbinic education. And the author of the first of the Synoptic Gospels is not the only writer who, identifying prophecy with bare prediction, is constantly engaged in the search for minute parallelisms between the Hebrew Scriptures and their fulfilment. On the specific subject of their inspiration, however, the authors of the New Testament say but little, contenting themselves with a few general statements, such as 'Every Scripture inspired of God is profitable' (2 Tim. iii. 16), and 'Men spake, being moved by the Holy Ghost' (2 Pet. i. 21). Indeed, the silence of the New Testament on this topic is remarkable, in contrast to its reflection of the views of popular Judaism in reference to other matters. Its restraint, however, was not copied by several writers of the early Church. At the close of the Apostolic age Clement calls the Scriptures 'the true words of the Holy Ghost'; while in the second century Justin Martyr likens the action of the Spirit on the Hebrew writers to 'that of a plectrum striking a lyre,' and Athenagoras says that He delivered His message 'as a flute-player blows a flute.' In short, the view of the primitive Church seems to have differed but little from that of her predecessor, inspiration being still regarded as a mechanical dictation of words and sentences. The Jewish Rabbis had elaborated a theory; and the Christian Church—while formally committed to nothing more than a belief in the Personality of the Holy Spirit—was unable to prevent the popular view as to the mode of His activity from running into the

stereotyped mould which she had inherited from her ecclesiastical ancestor.

And, as the result, it is well to note that for many centuries the exposition of the Old Testament tended more and more to be strained and fantastic. On account of her polemic with the Jews, the chief interest of the early Church in the Hebrew Scriptures was confined to those figures and utterances which could be held to foreshadow the Christ. In her search for types and prognostications, as well as in her desire to avoid the moral and other difficulties of the Old Testament, she had recourse almost exclusively to an allegorical method of exegesis. Doubtless there is allegory in the actual substance of the Hebrew Scriptures. Yet the attempt to convert the whole of its history into a series of allegorical pictures—whether made by a Jew like Philo or a Christian like Origen—is to play an unwarrantable trick on literature, and make human language the master rather than the servant of human thought. Reverence is not being shown to the Word of God by those who regard it as an ingenious and elaborate conundrum. Nevertheless, it may be broadly said that, with a few exceptions, from the time of Origen onwards the popular interpretation of the Jewish Scriptures followed in the main the lines of an arbitrary scholasticism.

At the Reformation a great change took place, not at first in the method of Scriptural exposition, but in the view which a large part of Christendom began to hold as to the function of the Bible, and its place in the economy of the Gospel. Hitherto neither the Old Testament nor the New had been considered to be an independent authority for Christian doctrine. Appeal had constantly been made to both alike; but the witness which they bore to the Gospel had been regarded as

complementary to that of the Christian Church. The Bible was held to be but one of many evidences that the Church possessed as to the truths which she had been commissioned to uphold and proclaim, and which were also attested by her creed, her sacraments, and her worship. It is true, of course, that during the Middle Ages the authority of the Church had gradually come to be much exaggerated, and the Bible had not been sufficiently used as the touchstone of Christian doctrine, nor permitted to curb the luxuriant growth of ecclesiastical tradition. And it was a healthy instinct which led the Reformers to restore the balance, and to reinstate Holy Scripture as a check and corrective to the teaching of the Church. Yet by many the pendulum was allowed to swing to the opposite extreme. Most of the Protestant bodies, in disregard of the historical origin of the New Testament within the Christian Society, began to throw upon it alone the entire weight of authority for Christian doctrine. They looked upon Holy Scripture, not merely as the most valuable commentary on her creed which the Church possessed, but as being sufficient in itself as a basis of religion, and began to identify a belief in the Bible with a belief in Christianity. Here was the *πρῶτον ψευδὸς*—‘the initial lie’—from the effects of which we are now suffering, in that multitudes still regard Christianity as founded solely on the Bible, and as involving a belief in its complete inerrancy. Doubtless the Church herself shared the general conviction of the age with regard to the impeccability alike of the Old Testament and the New. But she was not bound to such a position by any of her authoritative formularies, and could therefore reassert a respect and veneration for Holy Writ without making it the one and only authority that was now to be recognised. On the other hand,

those who broke off from the historic Church, found it necessary, in order to safeguard their position, to formulate a dogma about the Bible, elevating it into the rank of an infallible guide, and affirming the flawless accuracy of its contents. In the various confessions of faith drawn up at the Reformation is found, for the first time in Christendom, a series of official statements upon the theme of Biblical inspiration, which generally describe it as plenary in character, and soon led to palpable contradictions and absurdities.

A single illustration will suffice. Nowadays every scholar is aware of the fact that ancient Hebrew—the language of the Old Testament—was written purely in consonants, the vowel-pointings having been added by a group of Jewish scholars in the sixth and seventh centuries of the Christian era. Yet, in the Canons drawn up by a Protestant Synod at Geneva in 1675, it was expressly laid down that not only the consonants but the vowel-points also of the Hebrew text were divinely inspired, the Swiss Reformers declaring that ‘whatsoever is related by the Holy Spirit is absolutely true, whether it pertain to doctrine, morals, history, chronology, topography, or nomenclature!’

The real fact is that not until modern times has it been possible for any student of the Bible to appreciate the truth of its inspiration. The primary cause of failure in the past, by which Jewish Rabbis as well as Protestant theologians have been led astray, has consisted in the adoption of a false method of inquiry. Instead of going direct to the Hebrew Scriptures and investigating them with the assistance of all that scholarship and spiritual experience can supply, men have approached them with a preconceived notion as to their character, and have thus foreclosed and prejudged the result. On the other hand, the only hopeful method is

the inductive and historical. The data of the Old Testament must themselves be studied, and gradually they will yield to the student an assurance which will be convincing in proportion to his sympathy and candour. He will find no definition of inspiration. Nor will he be able to formulate any precise dogma to himself. The facts are too stubborn to admit of any short and easy theory, which will comprehend the essential truth of their significance. Nevertheless, as he reads the Old Testament in the light of its historic origin, the reader will come to the conclusion that 'God spake' to the Hebrews as He spake to no other nation in antiquity. He will perceive that their legends are cast in a distinctive mould, that their history from first to last is seen to be a history of redemption, and that their prophets are men of extraordinary insight and enthusiasm. He will find that the progressive development of an 'ethical monotheism' is the keynote of their literature. And, as he traces in the story of the Hebrews a growth in moral knowledge, he can see that it is clearly due to the fact that their vision of God's Righteousness became more clear.

Take, as an illustration, a couple of the legends related in the preface of the Book of Genesis. These introductory chapters contain, as we have seen, the Hebrew version of a mythology common to many of the Semitic peoples; and to compare the Jewish account of the Creation with that which has been recently unearthed on the Babylonian tablets, is to gain a vivid lesson in the meaning of inspiration. The resemblance between the Babylonian cosmogony and the story given in the first chapter—which belongs to the sacerdotal document—is evident at a glance. Yet their dissimilarity is quite as remarkable. Though the Biblical writer has borrowed the outline of his epic

from a pagan mythology, it has become the exponent of a pure and lofty faith. A fantastic picture of warring deities has given place before the manifestation of the One True God. While the heathen poet holds the universe of matter to be essentially evil, the Hebrew priest knows that it is good. In the Babylonian story gods as well as men emerge out of a pre-existent chaos; but in the Jewish Scripture God is Himself the Eternally Pre-existent, Who calls all things into being by His Word.

Or consider the story of the Deluge—a combination of the prophetic and sacerdotal documents—and note that which differentiates the Hebrew tale from its pagan counterpart. In the Babylonian legend we learn that Ea, one of the gods, told Hasisadra to construct a ship and to store beasts and cattle in it. Then the Deluge came. 'In heaven the gods feared the flood: they ascended to the Heaven of Anu. Like a dog in his kennel they crouched down in a heap.' On the seventh day after the grounding of the ship, Hasisadra sent out a dove; then a swallow; and, lastly, a raven, which did not return. Afterwards, he and his family came forth from the ark and built an altar. The gods smelt the savour of his offering, and 'gathered like flies over the sacrifice. Thereupon the great goddess approached, and lighted up the rainbow, which Anu had created in accordance with his glorious majesty.' Bel, however, was angry at Hasisadra's escape, but was propitiated by Ea, who suggested that he should send lions or plague or famine against the human race rather than another flood. Then Bel gave his hand to Hasisadra, and raised him and his wife to a home among the immortals. Compared with such a myth, the inspiration of the Biblical story is surely more apparent than ever. No reader can fail to notice the ethical difference

between the Babylonian picture—to quote the words of Bishop Ryle—of ‘deities, some angry, some interceding, some frightened, some rousing the storm, and some fleeing from it; and the Hebrew portrait of the Lord of Heaven and earth, Who alone inflicts the calamity, sending it as a punishment for human sin, alone abates it, and alone delivers Noah and his family. Nor can he fail to contrast the Apotheosis of Hasisadra with the Biblical covenant, and the whimsical caprice of Bel towards various individuals with the purpose of Jehovah’s love towards all the world.’

Now, in these passages the inspiration, in all probability, is unconscious. The Jewish priest in the days of the exile, and the prophetic historian in the period of the early monarchy, have but recorded the traditions of their race, without being personally responsible to any great extent for the form in which they have been cast. For these traditions, handed down for many a generation among the Hebrew tribes, had themselves been gradually changed and purified and ennobled by the influence of the atmosphere through which they had been passing. And, similarly, much of the inspiration of the Old Testament is a national inspiration. Its books bear the imprint, greater or lesser as the case may be, of a belief in the God who was revealing Himself to His servants the prophets. Through ‘the goodly fellowship of the Prophets’ the breath of God’s inspiration was poured forth upon His ancient people, raising their faith in a tribal deity to a trust and hope in the Lord Who ‘is our Righteousness,’ and bringing to their poets, sages, historians, and saints a fuller knowledge of His Name. There is, of course, much diversity in the degree of moral and spiritual illumination exhibited by the various writers. No one would claim for the author of the Book of Leviticus the same insight as

that which is found in Deuteronomy, or would think of comparing the Chronicler with any of the Psalmists. Differences of topic and of temperament, as well as of historic date, account for much variation in their doctrine. Yet throughout the Old Testament as a whole runs a vein of sublime enlightenment, such as cannot be found in any other writings of antiquity. And we believe it to be an inspired literature because it is the product of an inspired nation.

And when we come to the Prophets themselves, we can see the conscious agents in the work of divine inspiration. That which God inspires is not things, but persons; not books, but their authors; not an array of words and sentences, but the intellect and the conscience of human beings. From within their own spiritual experience the Prophets of the Old Testament tell us how they heard the voice of God, and how He sent them forth to proclaim His truth in the ears of a faithless and backsliding generation. Read the passages, for example, in which Isaiah (Isa. vi.), Jeremiah (Jer. i.), and Ezekiel (Ezek. i., ii.), describe the call which they received, and it is impossible to doubt the truth of their announcement. The Prophet does not start upon his task at his own initiative, for he is extremely reluctant to commence it. His inspiration is not from within, but from without. A call reaches him in the form of an overmastering impulse, against which he struggles in vain, till he yields before it and goes out to bear his testimony. And not only at the beginning of his career does the Prophet pass through a crisis which is obviously not the self-caused effort of his own genius. Scattered through their writings may be found many expressions which denote the coming upon the individual of some strong and irresistible stimulus, directing his action and constraining his utterance, so that his words,

though they proceed from the centre of his own being, are felt to be the words of God Himself. Hence it is that the Prophets, one and all, preface their addresses with the statement, 'Thus saith the Lord.' Their personality, though far from being superseded, sinks for the time being into the background, and the speaker feels himself to be the spokesman of Jehovah. 'Surely,' cries the herdman of Tekoa, 'the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the Prophets.' And then he goes on: 'The lion hath roared, who will not fear? the Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?' (Amos iii. 7, 8).

If anyone were to use such language in the present day, he would be regarded either as an impostor or a fanatic. But the Hebrew Prophets were no impostors, for their words did but bring upon them mockery and abuse, and led at times to imprisonment and death. Nor were they the dupes of their own excited imagination, since they are fully conscious of their unworthiness and incapacity, and their language shows no trace of morbid and ecstatic frenzy. Rising at times to great heights of passion and of eloquence, their utterances always preserve a note of chastened sanity, and are everywhere transparently earnest and sincere.

Yet although such inspiration as was vouchsafed to the Hebrew Prophets is not to be found in any other literature, it would be unfortunate to suppose that the Bible is the only book which can be said to be inspired. The sages of the East, the poets and philosophers of Greece, and the thinkers and teachers of every age and country, were also recipient of the breath of God's illumination. For all the action of God's Spirit upon humanity may justly be described as 'inspiration,' and the term itself is used more than once in the Book of Common Prayer with reference to

the mental and spiritual enlightenment of the modern worshipper. On the fifth Sunday after Easter we ask God to 'grant that by His holy inspiration we may think those things that be good'; while we commence every celebration of the Holy Communion with the prayer that our inmost thoughts may be cleansed 'by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.' For that which was given in unique measure to the Prophets and Apostles of the Bible is still available by faith to every son of man, in that He Who spake by the authors of Holy Writ has come now to dwell within humanity in the Christian Church.

CHAPTER IX

MIRACLE AND HISTORY

FEW people will be found nowadays to deny the possibility of miracle. The scene of the controversial battle has been transferred from the realm of speculative presuppositions to that of historical evidence. Not 'Can miracles happen?' but 'Have miracles ever happened?' is the form which the modern problem assumes. Nevertheless, questions which concern the historical value of documents professing to record the miraculous, cannot be separated altogether from the question of the inherent credibility of their contents. Our judgment—as Mr. Balfour has remarked—upon any particular narrative, whilst it depends in part on our estimate of the writer's veracity, the general character of his age, and the trustworthiness of his means of information, is also dependent on our opinion as to the intrinsic probability of his tale, since our estimate of the competence of witnesses cannot fail to be modified by our opinion as to the ultimate likelihood of that which they attest. And this explains much of the present diversity of view about the historical value of the New Testament. Those who approach the data of the question with a sophistical bias towards 'naturalism,' regard its testimony to the miraculous as inadequate, in that they cannot persuade themselves

to think of a miracle as a thing not essentially incredible in itself. On the other hand, those critics who start from within the atmosphere of Christian experience—where the signs and works of Jesus Christ are continually reproducing themselves in the moral and spiritual order—find in the documents of the New Testament an ample corroboration of their faith in Him as the world's Redeemer. Apostolic witness, commencing from a date not later than twenty-five years after His death, is more than sufficient testimony for the man who is already in personal touch with the Gospel. The function of Holy Scripture is not to enforce a reluctant consent upon the reader, nor to drive him into a corner where he will be confronted by a logical dilemma. Faith can never be the offspring of any form of compulsion; for if it were merely the outcome of an argumentative process, awakening no response within the individual consciousness, it would produce an intellectual paralysis rather than a moral stimulation. Yet the historical evidence of the New Testament, if unable of itself to result in an actual demonstration, is quite cogent enough to reassure the Christian, and to prove beyond all doubt that his faith is supported, not by fable, but by fact.

Our concern, however, is with the Old Testament rather than with the New. Nor do we turn to the Hebrew Scriptures merely in order to see whether we can discover in them a satisfactory witness to the miraculous, but to estimate the historical basis of their narratives. The annals of the Old Testament are, of course, but one part of its contents, and its Revelation is not limited to its historical books. Nevertheless, there is a history in the Hebrew Scriptures, and it is well to investigate its character, and to find out how far the various Jewish records may be said to provide

authentic and reliable matter for the historian. To review the subject in detail is quite impossible. Only a rough sketch can be attempted, and it will be chiefly confined to those documents which profess to relate the primitive story of the Jewish race.

Let us begin with a period which all confess to be indubitable, and then work our way backwards to the earlier stages. No one doubts that, by the time of Samuel and the establishment of the Monarchy, we have fully entered upon undebatable ground. The Books of Samuel and Kings are made up, as we have seen, of 'narratives of varying worth. Some are of an age long subsequent to the events which they describe; but others are contemporary, or almost contemporary, documents.' And if the judgment passed by the historian on many incidents reflects the standpoint of a later age, the general thread of his story is indisputably accurate and trustworthy. The figures of Samuel and Saul, of David and Solomon, of Elijah and Elisha, belong to the age of history in the full sense of the word. Sundry personal details, often of a miraculous character, may not have happened exactly in the way in which they are related. Yet for the historian these are of trifling interest, nor of any great moment to the student of Holy Writ. If one or two incidents are capable of a different explanation from that which is put upon them in the text, and in this sense may be regarded as not being precise transcripts of history, the general scenery of the time stands out before the reader in bold and clear outline. From the days of Samuel onwards he can feel confident that his feet are on the bedrock of history, and that—save for a few unimportant details, which do not affect the substance of the narrative—the course of events is faithfully depicted in the extant records.

As we move backwards, however, the situation is

perceptibly different. During the period from the Monarchy to the Exodus we pass from the open glare of noon into the twilight, where personages are still distinguishable, but their surroundings are becoming rather obscure and uncertain. History always fades away into the partial darkness of tradition. The story of Deborah, for example, as told in her own way (Judg. v.), differs slightly from that of the historian (Judg. iv.), the former being in all likelihood the more accurate account of her triumph. In the song she is opposed by a combination of Canaanite kings, of whom Sisera is the head; while the prose narrative speaks of Jabin as the king of Canaan, reigning at Hazor, and represents Sisera as his general. Nor is it unlikely that, in the prose version, the victory of Deborah and Barak over Sisera has been intermingled with the tradition of an older victory over a king in the far North of Palestine. Again, the conquest of Palestine is manifestly pictured in two divergent lights. In the Book of Joshua, as a rule, it is said to have been effected by the simultaneous action of all the tribes, and is represented as brief and decisive. The more probable account, however (Judg. i. 1 to ii. 5), describes the subjugation of the inhabitants of Canaan as strictly limited in character, and continuing into the age of the judges, the fortress of Jerusalem, the stronghold of the Jebusites, not being captured until the reign of David (2 Sam. v. 6, foll.). Indeed, it was not until the establishment of the Monarchy that the scattered clans were unified, and social and political order began to prevail. The judges were not national leaders, but rather local heroes, called for a time in a rude and lawless age to bear rule over particular districts, to raise the tribes out of heathenism, and to deliver them from Canaanite oppression. Traditions have doubtless gathered round

their names, and the compiler has interpreted each incident in the light of prophetic doctrine as an apostasy followed by a defeat, and then a repentance followed by a victory. Yet the main substance of the narrative in the Book of Judges is authentic history.

Nor need we doubt for a moment that the escape from Egypt is a veritable fact. Of course, as we have already seen, the episode at Sinai has been enormously expanded, the ten 'Words' which formed the nucleus of Jewish legislation having been amplified into the entire system of the Law. In short, that which was finally the work of Ezra has been attributed to Moses, while the ritual of the Temple has been thrown back into that of the tabernacle in the wilderness. The personality of Moses, however, is indubitably historical, as is also that of Joshua; while no one doubts the reality of the great event of the Exodus and the passage of the Red Sea. The whole of the subsequent literature of the Jews rings with the memory of that stupendous crisis, by which from being a horde of slaves they became a free people, united by the common experience of a great redemption. Even the date of their deliverance can approximately be fixed. The Pharaoh who began to oppress the Israelites was Rameses II., and their escape took place either in his reign or in that of his son and successor, Meremptah, early in the thirteenth century before our era. And the story of the Jews, as a national history, may be said to commence with the age of Moses.

It is when we recede into the era of the patriarchs, that the historian finds his ground becoming really insecure. If the epoch of the Exodus and the settlement in Canaan is the twilight of Jewish history, the period from Abraham to Moses is 'essentially pre-historic,' where fact has faded inextricably into legend.

It must not be forgotten that, at the time when the narratives of the Hexateuch began to be composed, the figure of Abraham had retreated as far into the past as that of King Alfred is removed from us of to-day, while even the Mosaic age was more distant than the Reformation. Archæology, it is true, has of late years reconstructed a background to the patriarchal age. Where formerly—to quote the words of Professor G. A. Smith—‘the father of the faithful and his caravans moved solemnly in high outline through an almost empty world, by the aid of the monuments we now see embassies, armies, and long lines of traders crossing, by paths still used, the narrow bridge which Palestine forms between the two great centres of ancient civilization’; while we can also note ‘the drift of nomadic tribes,’ such as the Hebrews undoubtedly were in their origin, on the border of the Arabian desert. Yet, while the possibility of the narratives in the Book of Genesis has been richly illustrated, ‘amid all the crowded life of the time we look in vain for any trace of the Hebrew Patriarchs,’ or any proof of their individual existence.

And when we come to examine the stories themselves, we find that they are often of a tribal rather than a personal character. The names of many of the patriarchs are those of the races whose forefathers they were supposed to be, while their characters reflect the traits displayed by their posterity. Jacob, for example, ‘is the essential Israel: in economy, shepherds settling down to agriculture; in religion, worshippers of Jehovah meeting Him at certain famous shrines, but carrying about with them domestic gods, as we perceive even as late as in the family of David; in temperament, astute, persistent, and undaunted by misfortune, capable of excelling their fellows in Semitic craft and fraud, yet also capable of Heavenly vision and struggles with the

Unseen. On the other hand, Esau is the characteristic Edomite, as seen in Scripture, and as found even to the last in the Herods of Idumea ; a hunter, living in wild, uncultivated lands ; a man with gods but no true religion, profane, fickle, impulsive, turbulent, and carnal.' To the critical historian the patriarchal narratives are not unlike the tales of the ' eponymous heroes ' of other lands. Just as the Greeks traced their descent to Hellen and his sons, Dorus and Æolus, and his grandsons, Achæus and Ion, so, too, the Hebrews personified their ancestry, and explained their relations with their neighbours by projecting them into the past. Many of the stories in Genesis have obviously originated in an attempt to account for an existing fact or to find a derivation for a well-known title. Three independent versions, for example (Gen. xvii. 17, xviii. 12, and xxi. 6), are given of the origin of Isaac's name, two of which attribute the laugh to Sarah and one to Abraham. And the frequent Theophanies to the patriarchs do but record the popular tradition as to the episodes which first brought fame to the sacred sites of Palestine.

Hence, the purely historical value of the Book of Genesis is but slight. Underneath the narrative can doubtless be detected a substratum of probable fact, consisting of a series of obscure tribal movements in the district between Egypt and Assyria. Yet little beyond the occurrence of the Hebrew migrations can be proved to be authentic. When it is remembered that the records date from a period averaging a thousand years later than the events which they narrate, it is not difficult to assent to Professor G. A. Smith's verdict that ' it is simply impossible for us at this time of day to establish their accuracy.' The earliest historians of Israel were more interested in tracing the Hand of Providence upon their nation than in probing

the historical basis of their folklore. The legends of their ancestral heroes were not improbably recited to the people at the local shrines where they met for worship, and were therefore ready to be utilised as vehicles for spiritual teaching. And for such a purpose they are still as available as ever. If our Lord Himself could use imaginative stories in order to enforce the truths of morality and religion, surely no Christian reader can disdain to benefit from a similar method of instruction, or to feel that he has nothing to learn from that which may be legendary. The worth of the patriarchal narratives does not depend upon their historical accuracy, but upon their insight into moral truth. Many a nation may have its 'Book of Origins,' its account—written or unwritten, as the case may be—of the creation of the universe, and of the birth and fortunes of its own forefathers. Yet none of them can for a moment match the Hebrew Genesis in the loftiness of its spiritual aim.

A word must be added here about sundry other books. Probably no reader imagines that the Book of Job is a report of a veritable conversation. And it has already been indicated that neither in Jonah nor in Daniel ought we to expect a story which is authentic in every detail. Though the men after whom these volumes are named were both historic personages, they were not their authors, and the literal truth of their utterances or adventures cannot be substantiated. In neither case was it the purpose of the writer to set down a prosaic chronicle of fact, but rather to preach a great sermon through the medium of a dramatic tale. Similarly, the Books of Ruth and Esther, based as they are upon undoubted incidents, contain also an element of romance, the latter especially being constructed with an eye to pictorial effect.

And now that we have surveyed in brief the historical basis of the Old Testament, we are more able to estimate the true significance of the miracles which it records. Our primary feeling, if we are at all in touch with modern ways of thought, will be one of immense relief. No longer is there need of attempts to 'reconcile' the Hebrew cosmogony with modern science, or to believe that the story of the Fall—pregnant as it is with spiritual truth—is more than an allegory. No longer are we puzzled by the measurements of the ark, the length of the patriarch's years, or the palpable incredibilities contained in the stories of Balaam, of Jonah, or of Daniel. We can see for ourselves that many of the miraculous incidents in the Old Testament are natural phenomena. For example, the story about the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah may be due to the reminiscence of a violent storm of thunder and lightning, perhaps accompanied by an earthquake, when liquid bitumen poured from fissures in the soil, and blazed out into a terrific conflagration. Even to-day the chalk marl near the Dead Sea is so impregnated with naphtha, that when kindled in certain places it burns furiously. In the same district palm-trees have been found petrified where they stood, and the story of Lot's wife, who became a pillar of salt, may have originated in an attempt to explain the mystery of some bituminous column, bearing the form of a woman. The plagues of Egypt, too, may be witnessed to-day, almost seriatim, on the banks of the Nile. 'Egyptian jugglers,' as Dr. Geikie has informed us, 'still catch a serpent by the head, and make it stiff and motionless as if changed into a rod; still, when the Nile and its canals are full, the abounding moisture quickens myriads of frogs and toads, and when the fresh inundation reaches the mud of last year's over-

flow, gnats and flies innumerable burst forth from their pupæ, and the locusts, borne along helplessly by the wind, are still a scourge dreaded above all others.' Even the last plague has its parallel in history, as a sudden pestilence 'following the "chamsin" or pitchy dark storm-wind. Its mortality is sometimes awful. In 1580 some 50,000 men died of it in Cairo in eight months; in 1696 10,000 died in one day.' And the passage of the Red Sea by the Israelites was made possible by the action of tide and tempest, the force of a gale in modern times having been sufficient to drive the shallow water from the Bitter Lakes right down into the Gulf of Aden, and leave vessels stranded on the marsh. Yet the Hebrew records are surely justified in attributing such occurrences to the working of God's Providence. Indeed, their value lies in their theological doctrine, and the interpretation which it enables them to put upon the story of the past. Believing the truth of their message, we can now perceive the Hand of God at work in *all* the physical processes of Nature, in *every* overthrow of civic wickedness, and in *every* national deliverance from oppression.

Many other episodes, also, of Hebrew history have now become as eloquent as they are intelligible. The manna in the wilderness may have been showers of an edible lichen, which fell in 1824 and 1828 in Persia and Asiatic Turkey, and was found palatable and nourishing. Or it may have been the tree manna, exuded from the leaves of the tamarisk, which was at that time much more plentiful in the Sinaitic peninsula than now. It is not unlikely that both the modern kinds are included in the Biblical description. Quails, too, are accustomed to fly in the evening, always down the wind, and keeping close to the ground. And when they rest, exhausted with their journey, they are easily

killed with a stick, or caught even by the hand. - Again, the crossing of the Jordan may have been facilitated by some landslip, which 'cut off' the upper waters, and enabled the people to pass over dryshod, an Arabic historian relating that in 1267 the river was dammed up by a sudden collapse of its overhanging banks. The statement that the walls of Jericho 'fell down flat' before the Israelites implies that the city yielded at the first onset, and is no exaggeration, but simply a graphic description of an unexpected fact. And the answer to the appeal of Joshua that the sun should stand still and the moon remain, vividly displays before the reader the unwonted brilliance of the sunset through the black clouds that were rolling up the sky, and the fact that as they scattered the moon shone out clear upon the scene.

Such interpretations as these do not banish God from the universe, or obliterate Him from the pages of Hebrew story. He is not being magnified by those who make Him out to be unintelligible, nor is the glory of His operations lessened when they are seen to be in accordance with law. Hence, if the question is asked whether the history of the Old Testament contains any events which are miraculous, the answer depends upon the meaning which is attached to the word 'miracle.' Popularly, the term is used of a physical occurrence, involving an interruption or suspension of natural law. And, in this restricted sense, the evidence of the Hebrew documents may be regarded by some as insufficient. There is nothing, at least, in the creeds of Christendom—which are the standard of Catholic orthodoxy—that can be said necessarily to imply a belief in the physical miracles of the Old Testament. A loyal and hearty acceptance of the Catholic faith is not incompatible with a hesita-

tion to accept the witness of the Hebrew Scriptures to the material actuality of miracles. Each miraculous phenomenon must be taken and studied by itself, and documentary proof which appears adequate to one reader may seem to be unconvincing to another. Yet it must be remembered that a miracle is not necessarily a physical portent. All religion is in truth miraculous. If the relation between God and man is one of unity and moral reciprocity, man's desire for intercourse with Heaven and God's response to human aspirations must both alike be from first to last a miracle. For a miracle is simply a phenomenon that transcends the laws that are known to regulate the material universe, and all spiritual phenomena are therefore miraculous. The miracle of the Old Testament is the universal miracle of religion, intensified by the fact that God 'took the initiative' in manifesting Himself to a chosen race. Everywhere it is assumed that men are in covenant with God, that He is the Arbiter of national destiny and the Support and Refuge of faithful souls, and is disclosing the content of His will to 'His servants, the prophets.' It is not so much the external facts of Jewish story that are unique, but rather the internal experience of their greatest men, which in turn reacted upon the course of events through the influence which it exerted upon their national character. God's Providence watched over the Gentiles as well as the Jews at all time; and that which He granted to the Hebrew nation was, not a series of physical marvels, but a moral Revelation of His Name.

For every miracle is primarily ethical. The function of the miraculous is not evidential, save to the moral sense. Miracles do not serve to attest the fact of Revelation, but rather to interpret it, and to unfold a special aspect of its meaning. Inspiration, for example,

is a miraculous phenomenon. Yet it proves nothing more than its own reality, showing that human beings are capable of hearing the voice of God, and that He is ever ready to disclose more and more of His Character and Purpose. . The miracle of Christendom is a moral Apocalypse, unfolding God's Personality and Work. And in its light we can see wherein the theology of the Old Testament was finally defective and incomplete. Judaic Deism is not the form of the Christian philosophy of religion. A God Who is wholly Transcendant is not the God in Whom we believe, nor One Who only 'interferes' at times in Nature and in human history. The truth of the Divine Immanence alike in the world and in human nature could not be correlated by the Hebrews with that of their own 'Ethical Monotheism.' But the miracle of our Lord's Advent has provided the supplement that was required by the Hebrew theology. We hold to Him Who has disclosed Himself at once as indwelling in the universe and separate from it, and as Immanent not only in the world of Nature, but of human nature also. For the Name Which we who are Christians have to hallow is not that of an Omnipotent Magician : it is the Name of Him who 'is over all and through all and in all' (Eph. iv. 6)—the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—the three Persons and yet the One God, 'in Whom we live and move and have our being.'

CHAPTER X

PROPHECY AND MORALS

‘As long as the world lasts, all who want to make progress in righteousness will come to Israel for inspiration, as to the people who have had the sense of righteousness in pre-eminent degree; and in hearing and reading the words that Israel has uttered for us, those who care for conduct will find a glow and a force which they could find nowhere else. As well imagine a man with a sense of sculpture not cultivating it by the remains of Greek art, or a man with a sense of poetry not cultivating it by the help of Homer and Shakespeare, as a man with a sense for conduct not cultivating it by the help of the Bible.’

In these words Matthew Arnold put his finger on that which he held to be the permanent value of Holy Writ. And, although his judgment may appear somewhat limited and partial, he has indicated one of the characteristic features of Hebrew religion. It is true that the famous phrase in which he described the God of the Old Testament as a ‘Power, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness,’ is not altogether an accurate summary of the facts as they are disclosed by modern criticism. ‘Nothing,’ says Professor G. A. Smith, ‘is more certain about the object of Israel’s faith than that, first, it was a Person, and secondly, that the character

of this Person was by no means only or predominantly Righteousness.' It was by slow degrees, and chiefly through the influence of the great prophets, that the moral side of Jehovah's Character became supreme. Nor did the people as a whole ever rise to the heights of that 'ethical monotheism,' which was the final outcome of prophetic inspiration. Nevertheless, the evolution of the Hebrew faith is largely the story of an education in morals, which can be seen to have been unique in its character from the beginning. To give an exhaustive account of the various stages through which their religion passed, from the age of the Exodus onwards, would be to tell the tale of the Old Testament. We must be content with a brief review of its earlier growth. After touching upon the pre-prophetic period, which lasted from the days of Moses down to those of Elijah, we shall pass on to the work of the monarchical prophets, and note a few of the truths about God's moral Character and Government which some of them were privileged to learn and to proclaim.

The Hebrews were a branch of the Semitic family, and closely related—as their own traditions assert—to certain other tribes of the same stock, who dwelt on the borders of their ancestral desert of Arabia, such as Edom, Moab, and Ammon; and in its origin their religion had many features in common with that of their Semitic kinsfolk. It has been justly described as 'Henotheism,' or worship of one God, Who made an exclusive claim upon His own people, but was not believed to be the sole Deity. The God of the early Hebrews was a territorial God, the Lord of the land of Israel, beyond which His worship was invalid. And the Israelites looked to their tribal Deity for judicial decisions and for leadership in war, ascribing their victories to His favour and their defeats to His anger,

in much the same way as the Moabites are recorded on the famous stone of Mesha to have looked to Chemosh, the god of Moab. Jephthah, for example (Judg. xi. 24), regards Chemosh as having as real an existence as his own tutelary deity. And when Naomi tells Ruth that her sister has gone back to her own people and her own gods, Ruth answers (Ruth i. 16) that she is content to follow Naomi, and to cleave to her people and her God. After the Israelites have been smitten before the Philistines, it is resolved to carry the Ark on to the field of battle (1 Sam. iv. 3), in order to insure the assistance of Jehovah at the next engagement. When David is driven into exile, he feels that he can no longer serve Jehovah, as he has passed into a country which belongs to 'other gods' (1 Sam. xxvi. 19). Similarly, Naaman is allowed by Elisha to carry back to Syria some of Israel's soil (2 Kings v. 17), in order that by erecting an altar upon it he may be able to offer sacrifice to Jehovah. And if such a step on the part of the prophet be no more than a concession to the weakness of a heathen brother, the author of the Hebrew narrative in the Book of Kings has not yet risen to the heights of a monotheistic faith. When Israel and Judah, in alliance with Edom, are conducting a campaign in the land of Moab, the Moabite king offers up his eldest son to Chemosh, who is so greatly appeased by the sacrifice that 'there came great wrath upon Israel' (2 Kings iii. 27), and they were compelled to return to their own borders. Here the historian represents Chemosh as having defended his own territory with success against the aggression of Jehovah and His hosts.

Alongside of this popular conception, which limited the sphere of Jehovah's influence to His heritage in Israel, we find that in the earlier period of Hebrew religion particular spots in Palestine were considered

to be specially sacred, in that Jehovah had there manifested His presence. Samuel (1 Sam. vii. 17, ix. 12) offers sacrifice at Ramah, Solomon (1 Kings iii. 4) at Gibeon, and Elijah (1 Kings xviii. 30) at Carmel. For even after the Temple had been built at Jerusalem, local sanctuaries continued to exist in several places, and seem to have been numerous (1 Kings xix. 10) in the Northern Kingdom. Each of these 'high places' had an altar made of earth or unhewn stone, standing in the open air, and generally by its side stood a rough stone pillar, as a symbol of the Divine habitation. Such an arrangement, however, was fraught with danger. The worship of Jehovah being similar in many respects to that of the local deities of the Canaanites, the people were constantly falling away from Him, and even identifying Him with the heathen gods. Hence it became necessary to centralise His cultus at Jerusalem. The Book of Deuteronomy—which formed the basis of the reforms of Josiah—for the first time prohibited all sacrifice elsewhere than in the Temple, and by removing once for all the peril of confusing Jehovah with the gods of Canaan paved the way for a more spiritual conception of His Being.

What, then, was the feature which distinguished the religion of the Israelites from that of their neighbours in its earlier stages? In a word, it was its morality. From the time of Moses onwards we find among the Hebrews an ethical sentiment which is loftier than that of the other Semitic peoples, and which rises higher and higher as time goes on. Worshipping a tribal god, the morality of all the Semites was of a tribal character. Their deity was little more than 'a glorified sheikh,' and his interests were identified with the selfish interests of the nation. 'Neither justice nor mercy was

the supreme care of the deity, but the victory and prosperity of his people. On the one hand there was no idea of humanity as a whole, and on the other but little sense of the value of the individual in himself.' Now, much of this tribal morality survives in the earlier religion of Israel. Deborah's praise of Jael, the exterminating wars of Joshua, and the fact that Samuel 'hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord' (1 Sam. xv. 33), require no justification beyond a knowledge of the ethical sentiment of the age. Nor is it necessary to apologise for Jephthah's vow, or for the story of Abraham's sacrifice, seeing that a child was regarded as its parent's property and belonging to the father in the same sense as his ox or his ass. Instead of fastening upon those incidents and utterances which betray a rudimentary sense of righteousness, and feeling surprised at their inclusion in Holy Writ, we require to note the moral beauty exhibited by the early literature of the Hebrews.

Read Deborah's ballad (Judg. v.), for example, with its scathing exposure of those who preferred material ambitions to the call of a great emergency, and its burst of praise to God for those who 'offered themselves willingly' on the national altar, and you will find in it the secret of the virtue of patriotism everywhere. Note how Samuel, in rehearsing 'the righteous acts of Jehovah' (1 Sam. xii. 7, foll.), boldly declares to the people that it was their own God Who sold them, when they forgot His covenant, into the hands of the heathen. Turn to David's elegy upon Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam. i. 19, foll.), and see how it breathes not only a generous appreciation for a great soldier, but also by its silence the spirit of forgiveness for all the cruel wrongs which he had received at the hands of his persecutor. Listen to Nathan, the prophet, when he convicts his own

sovereign of a dastardly crime (2 Sam. xii. 7), and then listen to the noble penitence of the guilty king. See how Micaiah ben Imlah breaks away from the idea that the tribal god must necessarily give victory to his tribe, and proclaims (1 Kings xxii. 7, foll.) at the risk of martyrdom the defeat of Ahab. Read the narrative of Elijah (1 Kings xviii., xxi.) as he enforces the claims of Jehovah, not only against the deities of Phœnicia, but in the teeth of his own people, and as he upholds the rights of the common man against a rapacious monarch. Study the portraits of the patriarchs, and the tone of ethical reflection which they display: 'How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?' asks Joseph (Gen. xxxix. 9) in the face of his great temptation. And we cannot but feel that, if Jehovah is still a tribal Deity, His Character is no longer confined within the limits of a tribal morality.

It will be already obvious that the prophets were the main instrument by which the ethical characteristics of Jehovah were set forth. The prophetic order, however, was not at first an institution peculiar to the Hebrews. Baal had his devotees (1 Kings xviii. 19, foll.) as well as Jehovah. And it seems likely that the Hebrew prophets were originally bands of fanatical enthusiasts, who traversed the country upholding by frenzied speech the claims of Jehovah, and preaching a crusade against the Philistines and all other infidels. By founding schools at Bethel, Jericho, and Gilgal, Samuel made provision for regulating the turbulent and ecstatic element in the order, and converting it into a means of popular edification. Long before the time of Elijah the prophets did good service, rebuking the sins of those in high places, and keeping alive among the people a knowledge of the pure religion of Jehovah. When they became a professional class, it

was only now and then that one of their number rose to play a striking part in the national history.

It was the task of those prophets of the monarchical period, whose writings have survived in the pages of the Old Testament, to raise the religion of the Hebrews from 'Henotheism' to monotheism, proclaiming Jehovah to be the One and Only Deity and Lord of the whole earth. In order to appreciate their work, it is necessary to take note of the social condition of Palestine in the eighth century. A change had taken place since the establishment of the monarchy. During the prolonged struggle with Syria the unwall'd villages had been found insecure, agriculture had come to a standstill, and the poor had flocked into the cities. And though the war had now reached a successful conclusion, and signs of material prosperity were numerous, nevertheless the lot of the people was bitter in the extreme, while the wealthy had given themselves up to gross self-indulgence. 'The simple manners and customs,' writes Canon Ottley, 'of a pastoral community had gradually been replaced by the habits of town life, with its sharp contrasts between wealth and poverty, its vices and luxuries, its artificial wants, and its deterioration of character. . . . The gulf between rich and poor grew daily wider; while the inveterate curse of Oriental life, corruption and partiality in the administration of justice, aggravated the burdens of the oppressed and helpless classes.' Added to this, religion was outwardly in a flourishing state, the sanctuaries being thronged with crowds of worshippers and lavishly enriched by tithes and free-will offerings. It was into this welter of hypocrisy and moral degradation that the prophets flung themselves with a burning zeal for the honour of Jehovah. The need of repentance and the certainty of judgment unless an amendment takes place at once, is

the constant burden of their teaching. Preachers of social righteousness before everything else, they have but little to say to the individual soul and nothing whatsoever about a future life. Their concern is with the nation and its destiny here upon earth. Battling with contumely and misrepresentation, they raise their voices on behalf of the eternal claim of Justice, denouncing every form of iniquity, and expounding to the people the meaning of Jehovah's Will.

To illustrate the doctrine of the prophets satisfactorily, it would be needful to consider in detail their recorded utterances, which are but an abbreviated summary of their popular teaching. A couple of instances must suffice, and a scanty notice is all that can be attempted.

Take, firstly, the message which Amos, 'the herdsman,' proclaimed at the chief sanctuary of the Northern Kingdom. Jehovah had recently given victory over Damascus, and with blind confidence in their Patron the people were shouting, 'The Lord, the God of hosts, is with us' (Amos v. 14). The prophet begins by explaining why Syria and other nations have been worsted in battle. Damascus, and Ammon also, have cruelly maltreated the inhabitants of Gilead, Philistia is the home of slavery, and Edom has borne an unrelenting hatred against its kith and kin. It is not because they have not professed to worship Jehovah that they have been punished, but because they have transgressed the laws of morality. And the same measure is to be meted out by Jehovah upon Judah and upon Israel. Nay, the sin of Israel is immensely magnified by the fact that Jehovah has brought them up from Egypt, driven out the Amorites before them, and raised up prophets from among their own children. 'You only have I known of all the families of the earth:

therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities' (iii. 2). Then the prophet turns upon the wickedness of the great, and with fine satire assails their worship, bidding them prepare to meet their God, not with sacrifices, but by discerning the signs of Jehovah's Government in their recent history. At last he breaks into open speech, and announces that the inhabitants of Samaria will be carried away into captivity beyond Damascus. Let not the people cling to 'the day of the Lord' (v. 18, 19, 20), imagining it to be a day in which Jehovah shall intervene on behalf of His people against their political enemies: it will be a day in which He will vindicate His righteousness against all that sets itself up in opposition to His will, whether amongst His own people or amongst any other nation on the earth. Then, as Amaziah, the high-priest of Bethel, requests this obscure rustic (vii. 12, foll.) to go back to his home, the prophet reiterates his message of judgment with still greater clearness, adding that Amaziah will live to see it fulfilled.

Now, such an utterance as this was a new thing in history. The old 'proposition of faith' had been little more than a call to be loyal to the national god. But when Amos asserts that Jehovah is dealing with other nations (ix. 7) and judging them, and His own people also, by a moral standard, he is asserting a fresh truth, utterly subversive of the conceptions of Jehovah that were entertained by the people and their leaders. Nor is it possible to appreciate the genius of the prophets, or the truth of their inspiration, unless we know something of the nature of the popular religion of their day. The faith of the multitude during the monarchical period was little better than that of their heathen neighbours, Jehovah being still but the nearest and the strongest of the Semitic deities. When we realise that

this was the soil upon which Hebrew prophecy rose into being, we can perceive that Amos is one of the most original figures in Jewish history; and though he was not a statesman, and had no scheme of reform for Church and State, his work is typical of the prophetic mission. His aim was simply to produce a conviction of sin by a direct appeal to the national conscience, and by pointing to the shadow of an imminent catastrophe. The advance of the Assyrian Empire—which has been described as ‘by far the greatest event of the eighth century before Christ’—was seen by him in its true proportions, and the sequel justified his words. Paying no heed to his message, Israel fell before the conqueror, with the result that the Northern Kingdom disappeared for good and all out of history. On the other hand the Kingdom of Judah, assimilating in some measure the doctrine of her prophetic teachers, survived the shock of contact with Assyria, and though afterwards carried into exile beyond the Euphrates, emerged from its captivity with a stronger and purer faith.

In addition to the work of Amos, therefore, we may shortly consider that of Isaiah, the princely patriot of the Southern Kingdom. It was in his day that the horizon of Jewish thought expanded from the nation to the world by coming into touch with the great Empires of Assyria and Egypt, together with the lesser States of Damascus, Hamath, Phœnicia, and others. To the majority of the Hebrews Jehovah was still but one God out of many, and the theatre on which they had hitherto seen Him at work was that of their own national history. But now their outlook was being widened, and their eyes dazzled and confused by the vision of international politics. Each of these foreign nations had its own religion, and was led by its own peculiar god, while

each—in the vivid phrase of Professor G. A. Smith—‘employed, rather than worshipped, its deity.’ Nor was the general level of religion in Judah much higher than among its pagan neighbours. To Ahaz, the king, religion was but a legitimate branch of statecraft. ‘Because the gods of the Kings of Syria helped them, therefore,’ he says (2 Chron. xxviii. 23), ‘I will sacrifice to them, that they may help me.’ And for the same reason he made his son pass through the fire to Moloch (2 Kings xvi. 3), and erected altars to the gods of the heathen on the roof of the Temple at Jerusalem (2 Kings xxiii. 12). The originality of Isaiah is seen in the fact that, amid this chaos of thought and feeling, where no place could be found for any idea of unity or progress, he boldly claimed the whole world as the arena on which Jehovah was carrying out His design. Where others saw the conflict of nations, aided by deities as equally matched as themselves, the prophet grasped the truth that all things were working together for a common purpose, and sustained his country by bidding king and people trust in the faithful Guidance of Jehovah. To him more than to any other individual is due the ultimate monotheism of the Hebrew faith.

Isaiah is the first to insist upon the Holiness of Jehovah. He had himself ‘seen the Lord, high and lifted up’ (Isa. vi. 1), unique and awful in His Majesty, far above the vulgar notions of the crowd that came to ‘trample’ His courts with formal and irrational worship. And made conscious of his own defilement and the uncleanness of his people under the searching rays of Jehovah’s Glory, he is purified in order that he may offer himself for the work of God. With no less vigour than Amos he assails the social wickedness of Jerusalem, declaring that a State which is founded on injustice is

bound to perish, and arraigning the rich and 'the women that are at ease' for their vain and thoughtless luxury. Yet Jehovah, just because He is the Righteous Ruler of the world, will not utterly forsake His people. However severely He will have to punish them, He cannot finally reject them, as He has made a covenant with their fathers which will stand for ever. A faithful remnant will survive the chastisement which is to come upon the nation, and will inherit the blessings of Jehovah's Reign.

Isaiah never held any official post, but he gradually became the most powerful influence in the metropolis. He took an active part in the political schemes of the nation, appealing both to the citizens and their monarch to abstain from getting entangled in the affairs of Egypt, and to trust implicitly in Jehovah's Protection rather than in national resources and plans of human diplomacy. For a while he succeeded; but at last Hezekiah, relying on Egyptian promises of support, refused any longer to pay the annual tribute to Assyria, and the whole nation was 'swept away in a frenzy of mistaken patriotism.' Thereupon Sennacherib advanced. Jerusalem was closely invested, and only spared on payment of an enormous ransom. Such a disgrace confirmed the political advice which Isaiah had long been urging; but the most striking vindication of his policy was yet to come. Seeing that Jerusalem was still fortified, Sennacherib reconsidered his decision to spare it, and sent back to demand the immediate surrender of the city. At this juncture Isaiah stepped forward with words of encouragement, and by his unflinching confidence in Jehovah he piloted king and people through the crisis (cf. 2 Kings xviii. 13 to xix. 37; Isa. xx., xxxvi., xxxvii.). A sudden catastrophe overtook the Assyrian army. Sennacherib retired dis-

comfited, and never again did Assyria despatch an expedition against Palestine.

Thus was the faith of Isaiah triumphantly justified before his fellow-countrymen. The spiritual impression created by the prophet's courageous speech and action, in a moment of the gravest national peril, was never wholly lost. The deliverance of Jerusalem from the hosts of Sennacherib ranked—with the Exodus from Egypt and the return from Babylonian captivity—as one of the signal events in Jewish history, which demonstrated Jehovah's love and care for His own people.

A remark may be appended here about the 'imprecations' contained in several of the psalms. Students of the Psalter are sometimes astonished at the vindictive temper displayed in certain passages, and the difficulty is not decreased by the fact that these expressions of a low moral sentiment may be found side by side with the highest spiritual charm and beauty. It is, however, a fact of human nature—strange and perplexing, yet obviously real—that the devotional and ethical aspects of religion are quite distinct from one another, lofty spiritual feeling being at times combined in one and the same person with a poor standard of morality. And what may still be true of the individual was in history true of the Jewish race. When the nature of the popular morality is taken into consideration, the ethics of the Psalter are not only explained, but are seen to share in the progressive elevation of the Hebrew faith. Rarely do the imprecatory psalms express a feeling of personal spite as in Ps. cix. and cxxxvii, but rather a hatred of Jehovah's enemies (e.g., Ps. lxxxiii., cxxxix., etc.); and as the attribute of Righteousness became by degrees His dominant Characteristic, the hatred of His foes becomes a hatred of the unrighteous, and the

desire of the psalmist is simply for the destruction of the ungodly and unmerciful (e.g., Ps. xxxv., lxix., and *passim*).

The question, Why do the righteous suffer? is the chief moral problem discussed in the Psalter (cp. Ps. xxxvii., lxxiii., xciv.), and was indeed the most pressing dilemma of religion to the people. It owed its intensity to the fact that Jehovah's Kingdom was limited to this present world, Sheol being a place beyond His reach, whither the godly and the ungodly alike descended, and met a similar fate of gloom and darkness. Not until the Maccabæan period do we find in Hebrew literature any hope of an ethical differentiation among the departed, or of a separation of destiny for the good and the bad beyond the grave. One or two of the psalmists, it is true, echo a higher note. For the development of devotional piety within the precincts of the Temple, after the return from Babylonian exile, led a few souls (e.g., Ps. lxxiii., cxxxix.) to feel assured that even death could not end their spiritual fellowship with Jehovah. But to the popular sentiment Sheol was the end of everything; so that if Jehovah's Name was ever to be vindicated, it must be here and now that He justifies the truth of His Moral Government before the eyes of men. Hence the 'imprecations' that occur in the Psalter are really prayers for the vindication of Jehovah's Character (e.g., Ps. v., x., xxxi., lv., lviii., and *passim*), and for the triumph of His righteous purposes, on the only stage with which He was held to be concerned.

CHAPTER XI

MESSIANIC HOPES

ALL Christians believe that the Old Testament points forward to the Advent of Jesus Christ. Yet there is probably no aspect of the Hebrew Scriptures which has undergone a greater transformation through the influence of historical methods of inquiry than the subject of their Messianic expectations. Before the days of modern criticism men searched for types and predictions, and regarded them all as Scriptural proofs equally valid for the defence and justification of their faith. To quote the words of Professor G. A. Smith, 'Preachers have spun their allegories of Christ out of every plausible character and transaction in Hebrew literature, and polished every rite of the Jewish Law in the attempt to make it a mirror of our Lord and His Sacrifice. It would not be unjust to call such men mere flatterers of their Lord, who, without moral insight or real devotion, have heaped upon Him indiscriminately all the titles of Old Testament history, as if it were the ingenuity of their efforts and the quantity of their results which were well pleasing to Him, or capable of convincing the doubter of His Divinity. The fancy that to discern some type or prediction of Christ where no one else has seen one was to do Him honour and confound His enemies, has been the besetting

sin both of the medieval and Protestant styles of exegesis. And nothing has been more guilty of rendering sermons on the Old Testament artificial and unreal.'

The mistake has chiefly been due to an erroneous conception of the nature of prophecy. A prophet, as we have already seen, is not simply a man who foretells the future. Essentially he is a man of practical religion, contending with his tongue against the social disorder of his day, learning in the throes of spiritual experience the truths of God's Character and Government, and proclaiming the bearing of a righteous Will upon the doings of kings and people. He is, indeed, the type of the true reformer. And to regard the Hebrew prophets as mere prognosticators of history is to degrade them to the level of the wizards and soothsayers that belong to every age and clime. Nevertheless, there is a predictive element in the Old Testament, and it is to be found mainly in the writings of the prophets. Out of their moral grasp of God and His action in human history they were enabled to discern the inevitable outcome of the spiritual tendencies which they saw at work in the world and in their own people. Because Jehovah was the One true God, anxious to disclose to men the meaning of His Name and to claim them as His own, they saw that He must vindicate some day His Character before the human race. Not by any magical process of second-sight, but simply by the exercise of spiritual vision, watching the events that were happening around them, and penetrating further and further into God by virtue of the moral intuition vouchsafed to them, the prophets truly became heralds of the Advent of the world's Redemption.

It has been justly remarked that amongst all the nations of antiquity the Jews were pre-eminently 'the people of the future.' In a sense, of course, the idea

of a Messiah may be said to be common to all religions; and, for example, in the 'Merodach' of Babylonian mythology we can trace more than one point of resemblance to the picture painted by the Jews of their Anointed One. For hope is a necessary factor in all national progress, and hope must always be based on faith. Yet amongst the Hebrews, as their faith in Jehovah developed under the influence of prophetic inspiration, their hope also began to assume a form which is unique in the literature of the ancient world. At first it was simply a hope for the national future. The establishment of the monarchy had brought coherence to the various tribes in Palestine, and given them a sense of unity and permanence under the rule of one who was 'the Anointed of Jehovah' (1 Sam. xxiv. 6, 10, etc.). God had delivered His people from Egyptian bondage; He had driven out their enemies before them, and had settled the children of Israel in a goodly land. Was it not the land which He had promised their fathers to give them? And now He had raised up 'a man after His own heart' to govern the nation, promising that the dynasty of David should stand for ever (2 Sam. vii. 8-16). David was always to have a 'lamp' (1 Kings xi. 36, xv. 4, etc.) before Jehovah in Jerusalem, its quenchless flame being emblematic of his undying posterity.

So the prospect opened up, capable of an indefinite idealisation and of producing an unbounded confidence among the people. The person of the monarch—as Viceregent of Jehovah—being held to be sacred and inviolate, it is easy to see how the king of the future would be invested by the Hebrew seers and poets with attributes that are really Divine; while the fact that the nation was indestructible by reason of Jehovah's covenant with its ancestors, encouraged them to depict

it as destined for a glorious future, enjoying every material and spiritual blessing. Of course, the prophets did not simply endorse the dictates of the national ambition. Amos, as we have noticed, told the people that 'the day of the Lord,' to which the popular fanaticism was always ready to cling, would be a day of terror and judgment as well as of rejoicing. For the Manifestation of Jehovah would inaugurate a process of moral sifting, and bring woe to the ungodly in addition to relief to the oppressed. Hosea is the first to refer definitely to a future Messianic ruler. He speaks of a time when Israel shall 'return and seek Jehovah their God, and David their king' (Hos. iii. 5), meaning one not only of David's lineage, but of his character also. And out of the bitterness of his domestic experience he came to realise something of the meaning of the spiritual betrothal (ii. 19, foll.) which Jehovah would make with His people. Twenty or thirty years later, Micah draws a more detailed picture of the Messianic age. Many nations, he says (Mic. iv.), will go up to the mountain of Jehovah's House in order to learn the secret of Israel's prosperity, war shall cease, and 'all the peoples will walk every one in the name of his god, and we shall walk in the name of Jehovah our God for ever and ever.' And he adds that Bethlehem, the city of David (v. 2, foll.), is to be the birthplace of the coming Ruler, Who is to be a true Shepherd to His people.

It is, however, in the writings of Micah's great contemporary, Isaiah, that we find a specially vivid representation of the ideal king, together with a wide and generous estimate of the meaning of his reign. We are all familiar with the passage in which he speaks of the child that is to be born, and gives his name as 'Immanuel.' Yet, in order to appreciate it, the context (Is. vii. 1 to ix. 7) requires to be studied, when

it will be immediately apparent that the primary reference is to a prince of the house of David. The Kings of Israel and Syria wanted Ahaz, King of Judah, to join with them in a league against Assyria. And the prophet, who regards such a plan as apostasy, after telling his monarch not to be afraid of these two 'stumps of smoking firebrands,' offers to authenticate his message with a sign. Stung by the king's hypocritical reply (vii. 12), he paints a blackened picture of his future. A child shall be born,* and when he comes to years of discretion he will have to eat the food of privation and affliction (vers. 14, 15); for before that day not only will Israel and Syria have fallen, but the dynasty of David will be sorely grieved (vers. 16, 17). Ahaz, in fact, had dimmed the glory of the expected scion of his house. Yet the deliverance of Judah is assured, and it will be symbolised by the Providential Advent of a god-like king. The prophet then appeals to the people, and afterwards turns from them to his own disciples (viii. 16, foll.), passing from sarcasm to pity and from pity to hope. And again he catches sight of the glory of the coming prince (ix. 6): he is to be 'Marvellous in Counsel,' gifted with unique administrative capacity, 'Mighty with Jehovah's Power' against his enemies, a kindly 'Father' of his people, endowed with an 'Everlasting' Sovereignty, and inaugurating a reign of universal 'Peace.'

Elsewhere, too, Isaiah returns to the same theme. He tells of 'the Sprout' (xi. 1, foll.) which is to arise out of the stock of Jesse, Righteous and Faithful in his govern-

* The Hebrew word translated 'virgin' denotes merely 'a young woman,' and does not specify that she is unmarried. It is prefixed by the definite article, which is here equivalent to our own indefinite article, and does not refer to some familiar person—such as the queen, or the prophet's own wife—but simply to the particular woman who will hereafter be known as the mother of a famous son.

ment, heralding an age of ideal felicity, when 'the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea' (xi. 9). The races of the Gentiles shall seek after His glory (vers. 10). Ethiopia shall send an offering (xviii. 7) to Him at Mount Sion, and the inhabitants of Tyre (xxiii. 18) shall dedicate to Him the gains of their merchandise. Nor does such a regeneration exhaust the splendour of the prophet's vision. He knows that even the great world-empires shall acknowledge some day the Name of Jehovah. Egypt (xix. 1, foll.) will have to be punished for its sin; yet the dwellers by the Nile, and by the Euphrates also, will assuredly be brought together in worship. And it shall come to pass in that day that Israel shall be 'the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth; for that the Lord of hosts hath blessed them, saying, Blessed be Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel Mine inheritance' (xix. 24, 25).

Jeremiah and Ezekiel have each something to add to the Messianic picture. The former had witnessed the reformation that resulted from the discovery of the 'Book of the Law,' and witnessed also the speedy disappearance of its effect and the final overthrow of the kingdom of Judah. Yet in his appeal to the backsliding people to return to Jehovah, he proclaims (Jer. iii. 14, foll.) that God will gather His elect, 'one of a city and two of a family,' and bring them back to Jerusalem, whither all the nations also shall be gathered together. Twice he reiterates (xxiii. 5-8, xxxiii. 14-26) the prophecy of a Branch that is to shoot up unto David and reunite his people, saying that his Name shall be 'Jehovah is our Righteousness.' And he also declares that God will make a 'New Covenant' (xxx. 31, foll.) with His people—very different from that which had been the basis of Josiah's

reforms—in that He would write His Law upon their hearts, and they would all know Him, from the least to the greatest. During the exile Ezekiel repeats the promise of ‘an everlasting covenant of peace’ (Ezek. xxxvii. 26), announcing that Jehovah for His own Name’s sake (xxxvi. 22, foll.) will cleanse the house of Israel from its iniquity, and place His tabernacle in their midst for ever. His characteristic idea, however, that Israel is a holy nation, separated from the world by its own peculiar covenant, does not admit of any participation by the Gentiles in the blessings which are in store for the purified community.

It is in the writings of the nameless prophet of the exile, included in the closing chapters (xl. to lxvi.) of the Book of Isaiah, that we encounter by far the most majestic vision of the Messiah. The figure of the suffering Servant of Jehovah has been already noticed ; but it is well to remember that, in the mind of the prophet, he is the ideal representative of the Jewish people. Many of the great personages of Hebrew history—Abraham, Moses, David, and others—are described as ‘Servants’ of Jehovah, and the title is specially given to the prophets (2 Kings ix. 7, xvii. 13 ; Amos iii. 7 ; Jer. vii. 25, xxv. 4, etc.), as being entrusted by Him with a special mission. And just as the prophets have been singled out from the mass of the nation to be the media of Jehovah’s Revelation, so has Israel as a whole (2 Isa. xli. 8, foll.) received a prophetic vocation to the world. Even the sufferings of the exile, however, have failed to convince the people of the meaning of their destiny. ‘Who is blind, but My Servant? or deaf, as My Messenger that I send?’ (xlii. 19). So the term is narrowed down to an Israel within Israel, consisting of those faithful souls on whom the hope of the national future must now

be centred. This true Israel is then presented as an individual—the Anointed Prophet of Jehovah—charged with the task of encouraging the depressed captives by the prospect of forgiveness and release. And as the significance of his work of reconciliation grows upon him, he realises that it is world-wide in its scope, and that he is to carry the glad tidings of redemption to the ends of the earth.

It is impossible to do justice here to the grandeur of this conception, and we must be content with noting how it foreshadows the death of Jesus Christ. The Babylonian captivity had brought Israel face to face with heathenism; and amid his despair and affliction there arose in the mind of the greatest of the Hebrew prophets a sense of his nation's capacity to serve the pagan world. Seeing that the pains of the exile were now falling upon individuals who in themselves were innocent, might it not be that these sufferings were more than a mere punishment for sin, and were intended as a call to proclaim the Glory of Jehovah to their captors, and to play the part of evangelists to the human race? Such a truth could only be grasped by a few, and they would be scorned and misunderstood by their fellows; so that the true Israelite would only accomplish his purpose through much agony of spirit. And so out of Israel's experience of the reality of such vicarious suffering—and perhaps from the memory also of Jeremiah's ministry and death—the prophet constructs his portrait of 'the Man of Sorrows' (2 Isa. lii. 13 to liii. 12), Who undergoes the anguish of spiritual isolation, and allows Himself to be reckoned as a transgressor and to die. Yet His death is in truth a 'guilt-offering,' and He is enabled to gaze with satisfaction upon 'the travail of His soul.'

A word may be added in this place about those

Messianic aspirations that are to be found in Hebrew poetry. Several of the Psalms contain an echo of the prophetic doctrine about the Davidic king. For example, a picture of the Prince that is to be and of the glories of his dominion is given in Psalm lxxii., doubtless inspired by a recollection of the golden age of Solomon. Another (xlvii.) represents Jehovah Himself as King, and as reigning over all the nations of the heathen, while Egypt, Babylon, Tyre, Philistia, and the Ethiopians are named elsewhere (lxxxvii.) as owning Jehovah as their God, and Sion as the home of all true worship. In Psalms ii., xxi., and xlv., however—which are often interpreted as directly Messianic—the reference is probably not to a future ruler, but to the actual monarch, who is crowned with a poetic halo as Jehovah's representative on earth.

We also meet with more than one reflection in the Psalter of the figure of the Representative Sufferer, sketched by the great prophet of the exile. In several cases (e.g., Psalms xxxi., xxxii., xxxiv., etc.) the poet seems to speak in the name of his nation or of its righteous remnant, appealing to others to gain encouragement in times of affliction from the unfailing succour of Jehovah. Perhaps the most remarkable instance occurs in Psalm xxii. It begins with a cry of despair, 'My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' prompted by the anguish of the poet as he finds himself scorned and outcast. His enemies have maltreated him sorely and stripped him of his raiment; yet Jehovah has not deserted him, and he will live to declare His Name, while all the nations of the Gentiles shall turn and worship before Him. In Psalm lxix. also we meet with a typical foreshadowing of the experience of the Cross.

And now we must pass on to the period that followed

the return from Babylon. It soon became evident that the lesson of the exile, as interpreted by the greatest of the prophets, had not been taken to heart by 'the children of the captivity.' Though glad to welcome any promise that ministered to their national vanity, the people had always been slow to respond to a call to repentance and amendment, so that even the sad experiences of their banishment failed to produce a sense of their divine vocation. It cured them of formal idolatry, and created a more spiritual idea of Jehovah; but it did not convince them of the true character of their destiny, as mediators of the world's salvation. And at the Restoration it was the ecclesiastical ideal of Ezekiel, rather than that of the Evangelical Prophet, that began to be realised. For unless the ruined Temple was rebuilt and the walls of Jerusalem reconstructed, the religion of Jehovah might fall to pieces, since there was no other centre round which the hopes of a glorious future could find a home. In vain did Haggai and Zechariah point out that the blessings of the Messianic era were dependent upon the moral response of the people, while the latter declares also that all the nations shall some day share in the worship of the restored metropolis. Malachi has even to contrast the earnestness of the heathen with the laxity alike of priests and people in Jerusalem: 'From the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof, My Name is great in honour among the Gentiles' (Mal. i. 10). For the first ardour of enthusiasm had soon given way to disappointment and indifference, and the New Jerusalem had come in the letter rather than in the spirit. It is true that the note of penitence and the idea of Atonement were embodied afresh in the ritual of the Sanctuary, and found an eloquent expression later on in many of the Psalms. Yet they became more and

more the personal aspirations of the individual soul, and the consciousness of a prophetic mission to the world gradually died away. For the ecclesiastical régime, now established by the work of Ezra and Nehemiah, was an uncongenial soil for the growth of an evangelic universalism. The Law, not the Prophets, was its idol; and works, not faith, the essence of its religion.

Prophecy, however, did not come to an end with the voice of Malachi. The Book of Joel probably dates from the Persian period, with its vision of the Day of the Lord, when He will gather His people together and deal recompense on their enemies. On the other hand, the story of Jonah breathes a different spirit, and recalls again for a moment the ideal of the Evangelical Prophet. It is not improbable that the book rests upon a historical foundation (cp. 2 Kings xiv. 25); but the writer—borrowing his simile perhaps from Jeremiah's phrase (Jer. li. 34)—has utilised tradition for a didactic purpose, and regards Jonah as representative of the Jewish nation. For, like Jonah, Israel had been called by Jehovah to be a prophet to the Gentile world. Like Jonah, she had been reluctant to undertake her task; she had been carried from her own land, flung into the sea of heathenism, and swallowed up by the great Empire of Babylon. Like Jonah, Israel in captivity had turned to God with contrition, and had been restored to her land again. But now, like Jonah, she stands angry and indignant at the mere suggestion that her foes are able, on no other condition than repentance, to have an equal share in Jehovah's Covenant. Jonah is willing to hurl God's threats of vengeance against the Gentiles. Yet he cannot brook the sight of His Mercy towards the enemies of the Jewish race. And the writer 'leaves him, still morose and self-centred, untouched apparently by Jehovah's last appeal.'

Jonah's attitude is thus typical of that of the Jewish people in the centuries following their return from exile. Composed at a time when Judaism was becoming more haughty and self-satisfied every day, the book forms a fitting close to 'the goodly fellowship' of the Hebrew prophets. It speaks of Jehovah, not as the Patron of a single nation, but as the God Whose Mercy is over all His works, and to Whom man as man is precious. And it leaves us—in Professor Smith's words—'with a grand, vague vision of an immeasurable city, with its multitude of innocent children and cattle, and God's Compassion brooding over all.'

A brief note about the Book of Daniel will bring our survey to an end. It marks a fresh development of doctrine, and provides new scenery for the picture of the Messianic future, both of which are prominent in the pages of the New Testament. Judaic orthodoxy was now teaching that, by a strict adherence to the Law of Jehovah, a splendid prospect was insured for the elect. But as it seemed improbable that any realisation of the national hopes was to be expected under the present order, Rabbinic theologians began to project their fancy into a transcendental future, heralded by a universal cataclysm throughout the whole creation. According to their interpretation of the Messianic Advent, Jehovah Himself would shortly step upon the stage of history on behalf of His people, would destroy their enemies, and establish His own kingdom for ever. Thus, the literature which began with the Book of Daniel directed men's thoughts to 'the last things,' as they have been called, to the Resurrection and the Judgment, and to the doctrines of Paradise and Gehenna. The earlier Hebrew prophets, without exception, had ignored the destiny of the individual soul. It was with the nation that their business lay, and with its past,

present, and future here on earth. But now eschatology sprang into existence; and the personal fate of individuals and of the whole world, as well as of the Jewish people, began to be focussed in the hope of the coming manifestation of Messiah's Kingdom. In the Apocalypse of Daniel, however, we find only the commencement of this doctrinal process, which continued for more than two centuries, and produced a mass of weird and fantastic writings. Here, for the first time in Hebrew literature, occurs an allusion to a personal resurrection from Sheol, and to the idea of rewards and punishments after death. The hope, too, is still confined to the Jewish people, and even among them is limited to a certain number, the faithful, especially the martyrs in the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes, being destined to rise to eternal life, and the apostate 'to shame and everlasting contempt' (Dan. xii. 2). And this judgment among the members of the Jewish race is to take place when the thrones of the world-empires are cast down, and 'the Ancient of Days' (vii. 22) comes to take His seat in His unending Kingdom.

To pursue this topic would carry us beyond the limits of the Old Testament. We have but room for a closing remark. In place of saying that the Hebrew Scriptures contain sundry announcements that are predictive of Jesus Christ, it is more just to say that, from first to last, they constitute a prophecy of Him Who 'for us men and for our salvation came down from Heaven.' Detailed predictions of specific events are not so eloquent a witness to the Advent of our Lord as the general tendency of Hebrew religion and its culmination in the writings of the Evangelical Prophet. It is well to remember that the shape which the popular expectation of the Messiah had assumed, at the dawn

of the Christian era, was the product of the later centuries of the Old Dispensation rather than of the period of the Monarchy or the Exile. The teaching of the prophets had been overlaid and misrepresented by the growth of Rabbinic tradition. It was not the doctrine of Isaiah and his successors, but the memory of the Maccabæan revolt, which was present in the minds of the people, when they tried to take our Lord by force and make Him a King. And the lesson (St. Luke iv. 16, foll.) which He set Himself to expound in the synagogue of His native village, was selected from a book which had been sealed for many a century.

CHAPTER XII

THE APPEAL TO THE NEW TESTAMENT

IT is still felt by many readers of the Bible that a hearty acceptance of the verdict of the Higher Criticism may involve dangerous consequences to the Christian faith. Some, of course, declare that they will have nothing to do with the matter, and close their eyes and ears to every argument, refusing to listen to any plea for a frank and candid inquiry. And there are others who, although quite out of sympathy with such a policy, are reluctant to investigate the subject for themselves, not in any sense because they are indifferent to religion, but because they are afraid of being carried further than they are willing to go. 'Once begin to tamper with the Bible,' they are inclined to say, 'and you cannot tell where you will end. The process which commences with the Old Testament will inevitably be continued into the New. If you affirm it is not necessary to believe in the historical truth of the story of Jonah, how can you prevent men from asking why they are still to believe in the historic fact of the Resurrection? Criticism cannot stop with the Hebrew Scriptures. The relation between the Old Testament and the New is too intimate for us to permit in the one case what is inadmissible in the other. Those who plead for an "open mind" in reference to the Hebrew

Bible will be succeeded by those who demand the application of a similar treatment to the Christian writings. You are simply letting in the thin end of the wedge.'

And at times the objector will proceed to justify his suspicions by a further comment. 'Is it not evident at a glance,' he will say, 'that the critical verdict is incompatible with the witness of the New Testament? The Apostles and Evangelists, in their references to the Hebrew Scriptures, are altogether on the side of tradition. Their views about the specifically predictive character of prophecy, about the personal existence of the patriarchs, and about the origin of the Pentateuch are not those of the Higher Critics. Nay, our Lord Himself has set His seal to the Jewish tradition, and its rejection implies disloyalty to Him. He mentions Abel (St. Matt. xxiii. 35), and Noah (St. Luke xvii. 26), and Abraham (St. John viii. 56), and Lot's wife (St. Luke xvii. 32), without ever inferring that they are not historical persons. He frequently speaks of Moses (St. Matt. xix. 7, 8; St. Mark x. 3, 5; St. Luke xvi. 29; St. John vii. 19, 23; etc.) as the author of the written Law, and recalls his words (St. Luke xx. 37) and his actions (St. John iii. 14; vi. 32). He bases an argument with the Pharisees on the truth of the Davidic authorship (St. Matt. xxii. 45; St. Mark xii. 37; St. Luke xx. 41, 42) of a psalm. And he utilises the story of Jonah's miraculous deliverance (St. Matt. xii. 40) as an illustration of His own rising from the dead. In the face of all this'—so the objector may continue—'we must do more than hesitate before we give a welcome to the Higher Criticism; we must definitely reject a considerable number of its pronouncements. It is not simply the accuracy and the authenticity of the Old Testament which is being called in question, but the authority

of our Lord Himself. And here to every Christian is the final court of appeal. That which is really at stake is the truth of His Divine Personality, which sooner or later is sure to be assailed. Once begin to admit the validity of critical work, and you have entered upon "the Downgrade," and will find yourself ultimately compelled to deny our Lord's Divinity.'

Now, in this objection there lies a stumbling-block which many feel to be serious. The appeal to our Lord's authority touches a vital chord, and raises a theological question which is undoubtedly important. It may be worth while, therefore, to consider what is the actual point at issue, and to try to remove the difficulty that it appears to involve. For we cannot be happy in our faith if we are haunted by some *arrière pensée*, which we refuse to drag out into the daylight. So long as there exists within us a dull sense of mis-giving that criticism of the Old Testament is but a prelude to an 'attack' upon the New, our hearts remain cramped with a chill dread of the future, and our minds are unable to expand freely towards the coming warmth. To slur over the point is to court its reappearance at some later day, perhaps in a more formidable shape. And if our faith is ever to have the strength of freedom, we must determine to 'face the spectres of the mind,' and slay them. There must be nothing which we wish to cover over and keep in the background, for we have counted the cost and are prepared to pay it.

First of all, then, it must be immediately asserted that no one proposes to warn the critic off from touching the pages of the New Testament. Criticism, as a branch of modern scholarship, finds quite as legitimate a material in the Christian as in the Hebrew writings, and there is just as much need of the 'open mind' in reference to the one as to the other. The Christian,

however, does not identify the 'open' with the 'empty' mind: or, rather, he asserts that such a thing as a mind free from all preconceptions does not exist anywhere, and that for this reason the only demand that can justly be made of the student is that he should try to analyse the character of his presuppositions, and to see that they are germane to the subject-matter with which he has to deal. In his own case he starts, simply because he is a Christian, with a faith in Jesus Christ and His Kingdom, and therefore approaches the New Testament from a particular standpoint. And he justifies his attitude by an appeal to the historic sense, maintaining that, since the writers of the New Testament were Christians, like himself, and, as such, occupied a definite position, it is uncritical to ask that their writings be investigated from any other than the Christian platform. No book can be understood save by those who try to put themselves into the place and time of the author. The ecclesiastical tradition which lies behind the New Testament, and is embodied in the creeds of Catholic Christendom, forms the bulwark against 'the Downgrade,' and preserves the Christian reader of the Bible from the unreasonable fear that an acceptance of critical results will inevitably land him in Agnosticism. Popular novels may assume that there is no logical ground for an intelligent faith between the Papists and the Unitarians, and writers in reviews may prove to their own satisfaction that the extremes of belief and unbelief are alone rational and consistent. Yet such a dilemma—though real in some degree to those who imagine Christianity to be founded solely on the Bible—has simply no existence for those who 'know Him in Whom they have believed,' and understand the true authority upon which their faith is built. No attitude is more disastrous to the cause of truth than

that of the man who declares that either the Bible, or Rome, or Nothing, are the only possible alternatives. There is a *Via Media* which is not a mere compromise, but the product of historical sympathy and insight. For Christianity, as we have already seen, is not the religion of a Book, but of a Person, and the evidence of history to Him is not only that of the New Testament, but also that of the Christian Church, alike as an ecclesiastical institution and the home of spiritual experiences.

And now we pass to consider the relation between the critical estimate of the Old Testament and the treatment of the Hebrew Scriptures in the pages of the New. The appeal to the Apostles and Evangelists does not require any detailed notice. For it has been previously shown that the Rabbinic tradition—which took shape and form in the closing centuries of the Old Dispensation—passed inevitably from the Jewish into the Christian Church. In reference to the origin of the Hebrew Scriptures and the methods of their popular exposition, the various writers of the New Testament could not altogether escape the influence of the Rabbinic standpoint. That Moses was the author of the Law, that in the main prophecy means prediction, and that the personages of Hebrew story are all alike historical, were commonplaces of the day, which no one thought of questioning. And Apostles and Evangelists were simply falling in with the universal opinion of their contemporaries. In more than one passage (cp. 1 Cor. x. 1-6; Gal. iv. 22-31) the Apostle to the Gentiles continues to pursue the allegorical style of exegesis which he had learnt in the Pharisaic schools. So, too, traces survive in the New Testament of some of those fantastic details with which Rabbinic imagination had embellished the figures of Hebrew history.

The Rabbis had taught, for example, that the Israelites were not merely provided once with water in the desert, but that a rock-fountain moved along with them (cp. 1 Cor. x. 4) during the whole of their wanderings. The Decalogue, also, as they affirmed, was not inscribed by Moses, but by Jehovah Himself, Who gave the tablets of stone to His servant by the hand of angels (cp. Gal. iii. 19). Again, according to their fancy, on the death of Moses a dispute took place between the Archangel and the Archfiend about the disposal of his body (cp. St. Jude 9). Nor are the writers of the New Testament immune from actual mistake. The author of the first Gospel gives a quotation as from Jeremiah (St. Matt. xxvii. 9, 10), when it is really taken from another prophet (Zech. xi. 13). The second Evangelist says (St. Mark. ii. 26) that Abiathar was the high-priest at the time when David took the shewbread, whereas the office was really held (1 Sam. xxi. 1) by Ahimelech. And an Apostle gives a metaphorical significance to a certain passage in the Old Testament (Deut. xxv. 4), and definitely rejects (1 Cor. ix. 9, 10) that which is the palpable meaning of the original.

Such instances will be sufficient to show that the authors of the New Testament were not infallible in their scholarship, nor altogether beyond the reach of the traditional views of their generation. Although they knew that they had 'found Him of Whom the Law and the Prophets spoke,' and had received through the Pentecostal gift a flood of light upon their Bible, neither Apostles nor Evangelists could fail to share still in part the sentiments of the Jewish Rabbis about their national literature. And when we turn to the figure of our Lord Himself, it is obvious that in part He, too, did the same. If a Revelation is to occur at all in human history, it must take into account the stage which at

that period humanity may have reached. Just as the Disclosure of God's Name among the Hebrews was throughout a process of accommodation to existing circumstances, so, too, when the Fulfilment came, it was bound to be a real condescension. Our Lord voluntarily emptied Himself of His Glory (cp. Phil. ii. 7) in order to enter upon the conditions of earthly life; and He lived and spoke, not only as a Man among men, but as a Jew among Jews. That with which He was concerned was the ethical and prophetic truth of the Old Testament. As to its literary origin or the historical basis of its narratives, His standpoint did not differ from that of His contemporaries. While He assailed unsparingly the Rabbinic interpretation of Holy Writ, He based His controversies with the scribes and Pharisees on premises which all would accept without question, and in speaking to His disciples and the people at large He started from the Jewish Bible as they knew it.

A single illustration, taken from a different realm, will serve to elucidate the truth of our Lord's position. In the Sermon on the Mount He tells His disciples to be merciful, even as the Heavenly Father is merciful; 'for He maketh the sun to rise' (St. Matt. v. 45) on the evil as well as the good. Now, the sun does not rise. Scientifically, as the world has become aware, this is an inaccurate statement. It is one of the many texts which were hurled at the head of Galileo, when he ventured to maintain that it was the earth which moved. Yet it would have been strange if our Lord had not been ready to utilise such an expression in order to enforce His spiritual doctrine. And as with science, so with scholarship, our Lord condescended of His own free will to accommodate His humanity to the prevalent opinions of the day. There was nothing

derogatory in such an attitude, but all that was merciful and gracious. It was, indeed, part and parcel of the reality of His humiliation, that He should have been willing to share the critical and scientific views of His generation. By no other means could He have substantiated His Messianic claim, or enabled any of the Jews to believe in Him or to comprehend His allusions to their national literature.

But, it will be asked, was not our Lord Himself aware of the truth about the Old Testament? And if we doubt His knowledge of the truth, have we not denied the fact of His Divinity? Here we reach the real stumbling-block, and we require to look it reverently in the face.

Omniscience is, of course, a necessary attribute of Deity, and as such belonged to our Lord from all eternity. Nor did He—the Eternal Word of God—lay aside any of His Divine characteristics when He was made Man. What He did was to abjure the exercise of His prerogatives, and divesting Himself of all external signs of Godhead, He ‘was found in fashion as a Man,’ having clothed Himself truly in that human nature which is common to us all. To discover the actual mode of His condescension, we have to go to the New Testament, and study the data of His Manhood as depicted in the Gospels. Perhaps the majority of Christians think that, during His earthly sojourn, our Lord ‘knew everything.’ And it is because they start by assuming His active Omniscience, that it seems to them impossible to attribute to Him any attitude of ‘accommodation’ to the traditional opinions of the day. For example, it is recorded that our Lord explicitly* stated that ‘as Jonah was three days and

* It should be added, however, that not a few modern scholars maintain that verse 40 is more probably a comment by the Evangelist

three nights in the belly of the whale, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth' (St. Matt. xii. 40). Now, if our Lord knew that the tale of Jonah's incarceration was unhistorical, Christian readers sometimes feel that His words are strangely misleading. And they often prefer to believe that the story relates a historic fact, than to credit the supposition that our Lord 'condescended' to quote as an actual occurrence that which He knew to be legendary; while they refuse to venture on the assertion that our Lord was not aware of its mythical character.

Yet, surely, such a hypothesis with regard to the method of our Lord's earthly Manifestation is utterly without foundation. If the reader will but reconsider the situation, and ponder the details of the story told by the four Evangelists, he will see that he has no warrant for assuming our Lord's Omniscience as Son of Man. On the contrary, such an assumption appears to be emphatically contradicted by the witness of the New Testament. The truth of His Divinity must not be allowed to obscure the truth of His Humanity. The latter has been popularly overlooked for many a century; and one of the advantages of the Higher Criticism of the Old Testament has been that it forces us to study afresh the evangelical records and the light which they throw upon the significance of

than the actual utterance of our Lord. In a subsequent passage (St. Matt. xvi. 1-4) the episode is repeated, but no interpretation is given of Jonah's sign; and while the Marcan version (St. Mark viii. 11, foll.) makes no mention of Jonah, the Lucan narrative (St. Luke xi. 29, foll.) explains his typical significance as consisting, not in his miraculous resurrection, but in his preaching and its outcome in the repentance of Nineveh. Such an interpretation is certainly more true to the prophetic spirit of the original, and more consonant with our Lord's method, than the remark attributed to Him by the first Evangelist.

our Lord's Person. If we start with the idea that, as Man, our Lord 'knew everything,' we run the risk of a rude awakening as we turn over the pages of the New Testament, because their evidence goes to prove that He did not. Of His boyhood we are told that He 'advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man' (St. Luke ii. 52); and as His physical growth was real, so too there was within His mind a real process of intellectual development. The fact of His Temptation is quite incredible on the hypothesis that He was consciously in possession of all knowledge. The narrative of the occurrence presents several difficulties of interpretation. Yet if in any real sense He underwent a spiritual trial in the desert, and if we are to believe intelligently that He was 'tempted' in all points like as we are' (Heb. iv. 15), we cannot believe that He was Omniscient. Throughout the whole of His ministry there are traces of a genuine limitation of His knowledge. He asked questions, sometimes, of course, in order to test His disciples (St. John vi. 6), but also manifestly at times (St. John xi. 34) for the purpose of receiving information of which He was in need. He expressed surprise (St. Matt. viii. 10, St. Mark vi. 6), and we must assume that He really felt it. His prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, 'Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass from Me,' and His cry of desolation on the Cross, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' were not the utterances of One Who can be said to have known all things. Nay, He expressly disclaimed the attribute of Omniscience, declaring that of the great day of the world's judgment 'knoweth no man, not even the angels of Heaven, neither the Son' (St. Matt. xxiv. 36; St. Mark xiii. 32). It is true that our Lord often exhibited an extraordinary insight into the thoughts of others and

their careers in the past, while He was also granted a unique intuition about the future both of them and of the world at large. Yet we must not overlook the phenomena which prove the reality of our Lord's Manhood. Ignorance is not sin. And in striving to understand the story of the Gospels, the Christian reader will do well in not striving to 'be wise beyond that which is written.' The evidence of the New Testament clearly shows that up to the hour of His Death our Lord thought and spoke as Man, because He had been willing to submit Himself to all those limitations which are essential to an experience that is truly human.

Hence, we need not be afraid of the appeal to our Lord's words, or think that in any way they foreclose the situation and negative the verdict of modern criticism upon the Old Testament. A study of His portrait in the New Testament, and of His allusions to the Hebrew Scriptures, does but help us to realise afresh the truth of His Humanity, and so to recover for ourselves an invaluable element of the Catholic faith. For unless we grasp the reality of His Manhood, His Personality is apt to remain a vague and unreal Abstraction, removed beyond the reach of our faculties, and unable to sympathise with our trials and spiritual growth. Intellectually, of course, it is not easy for us to correlate the two complementary aspects of His Person. How God became Man, how the Divine and the human co-exist in Jesus Christ, and how both of His natures are equally real, is the fundamental mystery of the Gospel. And the human intellect finds itself baffled in the attempt to comprehend it. The creeds of the Catholic Church do not profess to explain the secret, but only to safeguard it by putting a veto upon one-sided attempts at explanation. It is a mistake to imagine, however,

that, by simply holding to the creeds, we are apprehending practically the truth of our Lord's Person. As Dr. Gore has said, in order to preserve a vital faith, we have to turn, not to the creeds, but to the Gospels, to investigate the evidence of the Evangelists, and to scrutinise again and again the historical Figure which they present.

And from our Lord also we can learn how to approach aright the study of the Hebrew Bible. There is a freshness and originality in His method which is the true Example for all Christian readers. He leads us back directly to the writings themselves. His rebukes are never directed against a lack of scholarship or a want of acquaintance with critical lore, but against those who fail to note the moral and spiritual truths contained in Holy Writ, or who 'make the Word of God of none effect by their tradition' (St. Matt. xv. 6; St. Mark vii. 13). The scribes and Pharisees, proud of their expert knowledge of Holy Writ, receive no mercy at His hands, and are denounced for their blindness and the immoral casuistry with which they wrest the Scriptures to suit their own views and requirements. Yet for the earnest student He has nothing but encouragement. 'What is written in the Law? How readest thou?' (St. Luke x. 26) are the words with which He greets an inquiry about religion. He warns men against identifying the written with the living Word of God, and fancying that a reverence for the letter is all that is required. 'Ye search the Scriptures; for ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me' (St. John v. 39). And He is constantly leading His hearers onward to discover new truths in the Bible, bidding them desert traditional theories of interpretation, and investigate for themselves the real message of their Scriptures. If we

are able to believe that He is indeed our risen Lord and King, we too may be blest, like His earliest disciples, with the experience of finding that 'our hearts burn within us' (St. Luke xxiv. 32) as He speaks to us on the way, and opens our minds to understand the Bible.

CHAPTER XIII

A PROPHETIC FAITH

‘ I AM profoundly convinced,’ said Bishop Thirlwall, ‘ that if ever our theology is to be a moving force in modern life, it will be so exactly in proportion as we draw it from the undimmed fountain of the Bible. Lower down the stream is turbid, trodden into mire by the unclean beasts of controversy. There, at its source, it sparkles with the light of Heaven in all its native purity. And he who leads to the pure source rather than the turbid river, he who unseals the fountain, he who bids us quench our thirst there, deserves to be had in remembrance as a benefactor of his generation.’

Now, in reference to the Old Testament many are beginning to see that the Higher Criticism is performing for the Christian Church just that invaluable service which was eulogised by the Bishop. Providing us for the first time with an account of their historical origin, it has ‘ unsealed the fountain ’ of the Hebrew Scriptures, and enabled us to quaff afresh the water of life from their sparkling pages. There are some, however, who fail to perceive that the Old Testament, as presented to us in the light of modern criticism, is of any living value to the Christian Church. Interesting, and intensely interesting, as an antiquarian study, they feel

that it belongs to the past rather than to the present—a necessary stage in God's education of humanity—but that nowadays we have really outgrown its teaching. There is an uncomfortable feeling abroad that the Old Testament has become somewhat obsolete. Have we not learnt of late that it is essentially the product of its own time, and a record of the childhood of religion rather than of its maturity? Criticism has certainly made the Hebrew Bible more intelligible to the modern world; but in what sense has it made it more inspiring? Is it not more just to say that it has lessened the value of the Old Testament for modern religion? It has altered the character of its authority as a guide of faith; it has cut away much of the historical basis from several of its introductory books; it has eliminated from its contents, or at least minimised in amount, that which is physically miraculous; it has shown the tribal limitations of its morality; and it has denied a specifically predictive character to some of its most famous passages. Where is the gain of all this to the Christian Church? Is it not more patent than ever that the Hebrew Scriptures belong to a preparatory Dispensation, and have now to a large extent been superseded and eclipsed? And, recognising their transient nature, should we not confine our attention to the New Testament, to the Gospels and their story, and to the testimony borne by the Apostles to the Catholic faith?

Such an attitude as this is unjust alike to the New Testament and to the Old, in that it misconceives the relation of the Bible to the Christian Church. God's Household is 'built' not only 'upon the foundation of the Apostles' of the New Covenant, but also upon 'the Prophets' of the Old. Nor can the witness of the Hebrew Prophets to the Catholic faith of Christendom

be overlooked without an incalculable loss to religion. More than once already it has been remarked that the unique characteristic of the Old Testament lies in its Prophetic Inspiration, which distinguishes its religion from all the others of antiquity. And, as we are reminded (Rev. xix. 10) by the seer of the New Dispensation, 'the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.' Far from the Old Testament having been rendered obsolete by the progress of modern scholarship, it has been rehabilitated as an integral and abiding part of the Christian Revelation. For the religion of Christendom is a Prophetic as well as an Apostolic faith. And our debt to modern criticism lies in the fact that it has sent us back to the Old Testament, not in order to satisfy an antiquarian curiosity, but in order to learn more about the Gospel of the Christian Church.

It is not meant, of course, that the prophetical books alone are of living value to the Christians of to-day. The Psalter, for example, will remain for all time a unique manual of devotion, in which the human soul will ever find a matchless mirror of its own spiritual experiences. Nothing can surpass the patriarchal narratives as a means of educating the human conscience, and calling into active life the imperative of the moral sense. And the Books of Wisdom will never lose their charm or their utility alike for the speculative intellect and for the man of practical religion. Yet the spirit of prophecy—whether as reflected in the historical narrative of the Old Testament, or as finding vent for itself in actual utterance and exhortation—is undoubtedly the most characteristic item of our heritage from the Jewish Church. And it is to the Hebrew Prophets in particular that modern criticism is directing our attention. For many a century, as the Bishop of Winchester has

remarked, these men have been ignored and misunderstood. Their writings have been shunned as far too abstruse and oracular for the general reader of the Bible, or valued merely for the gleam of some evangelical utterance that comes as an occasional flash of light amid page after page of unmitigated dulness. But when viewed in the light of their historic application, these books are seen to burn with fire, to have a direct bearing on modern problems, and to be full of inspiring and suggestive thought. To elaborate this truth would be to write an exhaustive commentary on the prophetic writings of the Old Testament. Only a few points can here be adduced, nor can they be treated save in the most cursory manner.

1. Take, first of all, the relation which exists between the two complementary factors in all religion, viz. faith and works. It is an obvious characteristic of our age that, while impatient of theological doctrine, it exhibits a real enthusiasm for moral progress. Men who find themselves unable to believe 'the creed of Christendom' pay a genuine homage to 'the sublime morality' which they discover in the Sermon on the Mount; and they warmly protest that, in waiving aside the subtle abstractions of theology, their only object is to bring into prominence the simplicity and grandeur of the teaching of the Founder of the Christian Church. For Him, as Moral Prophet and Exemplar, an unbounded admiration is expressed. Societies have been established in England and elsewhere for the study and culture of ethical religion. Leaders in the world of labour have often a good word for 'the Carpenter of Nazareth,' while the man in the street and on the platform is often outspoken in his denunciation of 'barren dogma.' Everywhere it is being urged that we are to be judged by our conduct, and not by our pro-

fessions ; by our pursuit of goodness, and not by our orthodoxy ; by our moral attainments, and not by our doctrinal views. And the Church of to-day has undoubtedly lost the adherence of some of her sons because she appears to have deserted the rôle of a Preacher of Righteousness, and to be no longer truly representative of the public conscience.

Here is a sign of the times that it behoves us to discern ; for it indicates that within the mind of our generation an intellectual divorce has taken place between 'faith' and 'works,' in that they are not generally recognised to be parts of an indivisible unity. On the one hand, men often fail to see that every one has a creed—a stock of subconscious convictions—which reveals itself in his actions, and is, indeed, the mainspring of his ordinary behaviour : while, on the other, the meaning of 'faith' is frequently misunderstood. Faith is still frequently considered to be an assent to dogmatic formulæ, a bare credence of certain theological statements, a submission to some doctrinal authority. And, as such, its ethical value is not great. But from the Hebrew Prophets we learn that faith is a trust in God, a grasp of His Character, a loyal confidence in His Disclosure of His Name. Over and over again the Prophets call upon the people to 'know Jehovah,' to lay hold of Him, to detect His Presence and His Action, and to learn the significance of His Will. The awakening of the moral consciousness is to them the essence of every spiritual appeal, in that God's Morality is the primary truth of their religion.

It is true, of course, that the Name which we have to hallow is not simply that of Jehovah, the 'I am,' but that of 'the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.' Yet we must never forget that the Christian Name of God

is also the Name of 'the Lord Who is our Righteousness' (Jer. xxiii. 6). The Birth and Death, the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus Christ, and the Advent of the Spirit, have but intensified our vision of the Divine Morality, and established afresh the spiritual union between God and His people, showing us more clearly than ever that a love of Goodness is a love of God Himself. Nor is there any value in giving an otiose credit to such occurrences in history, unless it involves at the same time a welcome of their ethical Revelation. A belief about God is not the same thing as a belief in Him. It is quite possible to yield a ready acceptance to the propositions of the Church's creed, and yet to be an unbeliever. As Lowell said,

'To put more faith in lies and hate
Than truth and love, is the real atheism.'

And such is the constant burden of Hebrew prophecy. Has the Christian Church outgrown the need of this prophetic lesson? Does she not continually require to learn afresh what it is to believe in 'the Creed of Christendom'?

2. Akin to this, we may note how the Prophets struggle against the constant danger of the Christian as well as of the Jewish Church, viz. the sin of Ecclesiasticism. Every religion involves the existence of an apparatus of worship. Yet the besetting temptation of all ecclesiastical organizations, as history shows in sad abundance, has been to lose the sense of proportion, and to identify a ritual conformity with the practice of true religion. Has the Church of to-day altogether escaped the peril? The cry of 'Korban' is not altogether obsolete. Emphasis may be laid on the duty of liberal subscriptions, but not on the complementary duty of seeing that the money has been justly acquired.

Adulteration of goods and maltreatment of tenants and employees may be overlooked, if only the worship of the synagogue is attended every week. There is a tendency apparent in several quarters to regard the provision of a well-ordered worship, and the faithful custodianship of the creed, not simply as a part of the Church's duty, but as practically the sole function of her existence. And signs are not wanting that an excessive concern with matters of ceremonial is in some measure distracting the Church from her work of purifying and reforming the national life. In short, we are witnessing to-day a partial recrudescence of that insidious disease, to which, whether the invalids are conscious of the malady or no, our Lord has given the name of 'hypocrisy.'

Here again the Hebrew Prophets can convict us of our sin, and show us how to resist temptation. They scourge the people with their tongues, not because they do not worship Jehovah, but because their worship is formal and unintelligent and insincere. 'Bring no more vain oblations,' cries Isaiah, in his great arraignment of his nation; 'your new moons and your appointed feasts My soul hateth' (Isa. i. 13, 14). Nowhere can a more perfect definition of religion be found than in the well-known words of Micah reiterated in the Deuteronomic law (Deut. x. 12): 'What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?' (Mic. vi. 8). Hosea knows the truth about Jehovah when he proclaims, 'I desire kindness, and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offering' (Hos. vi. 6); while the sort of fast that God loveth is described by the seer of the exile (2 Isa. lviii.) as a day of redemption for the afflicted and oppressed. Such utterances are scattered in profusion throughout

the prophetic writings. And if the real significance of 'religion' is to be recovered by the Church, it will only come about through an ever-strengthening grasp of the Character of the God Whom she professes to worship, and a courageous and faithful proclamation of the meaning of His Name.

3. And this leads us on to another characteristic of the Prophets, in virtue of which their appeal is peculiarly consonant to the needs and aspirations of to-day. Theirs was essentially a social religion, intimately concerned with the maladies of the body politic. They had an intense consciousness of civic and national sin, and were themselves in the forefront of the battle for the uplifting of the oppressed and the moral regeneration of the State. Outspoken in their denunciation of the manners of the great, they were not content with merely inculcating the duty of tenderness to the afflicted, but enforced with vigour the paramount need of a social order based on honesty and truth. Their standpoint, as Dr. Gore has said, was never that of a demagogue. They were not the champions of a class, but of the Purposes of a Righteous God, Who cares infinitely for purity of government, for the welfare of the needy, for merciful statutes, and for equity in the humblest of transactions. In fact, according to the prophetic doctrine, God's interest in His people extends to every detail of their social morality, to their trade and industry, to their land-tenure and their sanitation, to their methods of gaining and spending wealth, to the condition of their streets and houses, and to their treatment as a nation of the outcast and the poor.

Is not all this eminently fitted to awaken a response in the public conscience of to-day? For the most part, the Prophets belong, as we have seen, to a time when

Hebrew society was emerging from an agricultural to a commercial stage, and when the growth of towns was becoming the dominant feature in the situation, so that the problems which they had to face are largely the same as those which are now pressing for solution. How is it that the Christian Church is not in the vanguard of those who are trying to find a remedy for our manifold distresses? Has her Gospel nothing to do with politics, and commerce, and social reform? Must we not turn again to the Prophets to learn the meaning of the Catholic faith?

If we do, we shall find in their writings how best to approach the task of social amelioration. They contain no detailed programme of reform, but reveal the secret of effective progress by declaring that the future happiness of the people and the true welfare of the State depend upon the national obedience to God's Will. Again and again they strive with passionate zeal to arouse in their fellow-countrymen a moral enthusiasm for Jehovah, pointing out everywhere that an ethical revival is the indispensable prelude to the brighter day. Not only are they examples to the modern reformer in their work and teaching, but they also afford him encouragement when his hopes are chilled and blasted. Notice how Hosea learnt amid the sadness of his own hearth (Hos. ii. 14, foll.) the reality of Jehovah's Love for a wayward and backsliding people. Examine the stages through which Isaiah had to pass, the buoyant optimism with which he started on his career (Isa. ii. 1-5), his disillusionment when he met the cold edge of fact (ii. 6-22), and the sternness of his unrelenting satire (iii. 1 to iv. 1), followed later on by an unwavering trust and a chastened vision of the future (iv. 2-6). Read how Jeremiah was tempted to take refuge in a purely individualistic religion, and to save his own soul

(Jer. ix. 2) amid the darkness that presaged the ruin of his country, and then realise the truth of that sympathetic unity with his nation which drew from him his bewildered cries of sorrow (xx. 7, foll.), and strengthened him to lay down his life for his people's sake. Half a century ago the great Lord Shaftesbury said: 'If for political and public purposes there is in the Bible one book more than another which throws light upon the days in which we live, it is Jeremiah. He was not always "looking at the sun," but he was looking to the earth, entreating, preaching, warning, threatening, promising; and he was, in consequence, regarded as a bore and a blunderer. Yet if his message had been attended to, Jerusalem might have survived for many centuries.'

4. Again, alongside of their social doctrine, there is something to be learnt from what has been called the 'Nationalism' of the Hebrew Scriptures. What the Old Testament contains is the history of a nation, interpreted by the light of prophecy; while the Prophets themselves came by degrees to be assured of the fact that Jehovah was also the God of all the Gentiles. And it is only by the aid of such a faith that any nation can perceive the meaning of its own history. To recognise the Hand of God in the story of the past, to acknowledge Him as the Guide and Leader of the people, to discern His sanction behind their moral progress and His inspiration in their heroes of olden time, is the secret of Christian patriotism. And there is perhaps no other nation in Christendom which can here gather more from the Old Testament than ourselves. 'We are a people,' said Cromwell, 'with the stamp of God upon us . . . Whose Appearances and Providences among us are not to be outmatched by any story.' We English are God's people quite as truly as the Hebrews were. It is He Who led our forefathers across the seas,

Who gathered them into a political unity, and gave them a dynasty to rule the land. It is He Who was the strength of the figures of our patriarchal age, of Augustine and Aidan, of Cuthbert and Chad, of Cædmon, Bede, and Alfred. It is He Who has given freely of His Spirit to mould the development of our national literature. It is He Who has brought the people out of serfdom into enfranchisement, Who has presided over the growth of our institutions, and Who has inspired our sages and poets and reformers in every age. It is He Who has punished us for our disloyalty, sending His scourges both on Church and State, yet protecting us in the hour of peril. Nor has the fact been allowed to pass without recognition at the time. On the medal struck to commemorate the overthrow of the Spanish Armada was cut the inscription, 'The Lord sent His wind and scattered them.'

In this nationalist doctrine, revealed long ago to the prophetic writers of the Old Testament, lies a rich vein of truth, which needs to be quarried anew by every generation of the Christian Church. For it will enable her not only to explain the 'storied past,' but to understand the events and tendencies of the present day, and also to appreciate and respect the sense of nationality in other peoples. A Christian people must learn to cherish its own character and traditions as a divine endowment and prerogative, and to trust in God as its Unseen Lord and King, not in the sense of some shadowy afterthought, but in the fullest sense of which the words are capable. And it must also learn that every other nation has a life and destiny of its own. We have therefore to turn for instruction to the Old Testament; for its rightful function is to interpret, to those who can believe its language, the real significance of every national history.

5. Lastly, as the ultimate product of their 'nationalism,' the later Prophets came to recognise the world-wide mission of their race. Through their experience of exile in Babylon, they grasped a fresh significance in the ancient truth that the God Who had spoken to them and to their fathers was the Lord of the whole earth, realising at last that their nation had been called by Him, not out of mere favouritism, but that it might bear witness to His Name among the Gentiles. Israel, they saw, was to be the world's Evangelist. And they perceived that to lose the sense of their missionary vocation was to prove false to the true meaning of their earlier faith, and to enter upon the pathway of national decline. For Henotheistic Nationalism, as soon as it was touched by Monotheism, could not remain such as it once had been, but had to be expanded into Universalism and its vision of an evangelistic destiny.

Here again we can learn from the Prophets an imperial truth. Have not the nations of Christendom their missionary function to fulfil, not only towards savage races, but the great civilizations of the East? And is it not clear that a faithful discharge of their responsibilities is the only justification of Imperialism, which in the end the Divine judgment of history will record? Does it not seem that on the English race pre-eminently has fallen the obligation to bear 'the White Man's Burden'? We are bearing it nobly in many lands. Yet, if we are ever to know the truth of our imperial mission, we must be able to see in it a privilege vouchsafed by God, and not simply the lucky outcome of 'a chapter of accidents.' Take India, for example, and its teeming millions. By the work of our Civil Service, the impartiality of our rule, and the purity of our judicial administration, we are assuredly preaching a Law, if not a Gospel, to the heathen. The

character of every Government is a reflex of its own beliefs as to that Everlasting Archetype of all Dominion to Which the universe is subject. And in a true sense our government of India is a herald of the Kingdom of God. Yet we are also the harbingers of decay and death. Western thought is sapping the vitals of the East, and breaking up the Oriental creeds and cultures. The sanctions of morality are disappearing, the social order is gradually being undermined, and the ancient religions are melting away in consequence of their contact with Western civilization. We, too, therefore, like the Hebrews, cannot be content to stand still as we are. And if we, like their Prophets, have really advanced to monotheism, if indeed we have realised that the God Whom we worship is not a racial Deity, but the only Lord over all the world, our duty to the heathen is obvious. To convert a Buddhist or a Mahommedan, a Chinaman or a Japanese, to the faith of Christendom, is not simply to ask him to exchange one set of opinions for another: it is to declare to him the Name of the God, to Whom he and all other pagans are offering an ignorant worship. For the evangelist comes 'not to destroy, but to fulfil.' Here is the appointed destiny of every Christian race, if it is not itself to sink back into paganism. In our generation there are not wanting signs that we have begun to recognise our evangelistic office, and to respond to the obligations which it involves. Yet if we are to persevere in the accomplishment of the duty laid upon us, we require the stimulus of a prophetic vision that can foresee the day when India, China, and Japan will bring into the Heavenly Jerusalem the treasures of their thought and industry, and East and West will kneel together in the City of the Living God.

APPENDIX I

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLES

A—BEFORE THE EXILE

- c. 1200 B.C. Exodus of Hebrew clans from Egypt.
- c. 1140. *Song of Deborah* and other primitive lyrics.
- c. 1040. Age of Samuel; 'schools of prophets' founded.
- c. 1030. *Decalogue* and *Book of Covenant* exist in writing.
- c. 1010. David becomes king; official annals commence.
- c. 960. *Psalms* and *Proverbs* begin to be composed.
- c. 930. Revolt of ten tribes, under Jeroboam.
- c. 875. Commencement of Elijah's ministry.
- c. 850. *Prophetical history* (J) is composed in Judah.
- c. 750. *Another version* (E) written in Northern Kingdom.
- c. 749. *Amos*' ministry; Books of *Samuel* begun.
- c. 741. *Hosea*'s ministry, continuing until fall of Samaria.
- c. 740. Call of *Isaiah*; his career lasts for forty years.
- c. 725. *Micah*'s ministry, until Assyrian repulse in 701.
- 722. Fall of Samaria; Israelites deported to Assyria.
- 701. Sennacherib checked; *Isaiah* saves Jerusalem.
- c. 700. *Samuel* completed; *Judges* and *Kings* begun.
- c. 626. *Jeremiah*'s ministry, until fall of Jerusalem.
- c. 625. Ministry of *Zephaniah* and *Nahum*.
- 621. *Book of the Law* (D) discovered in the Temple.
- 607. Assyrian Empire falls before Chaldæans.
- c. 605. Ministry of *Habbakuk* and *Obadiah*.
- c. 600. Books of *Judges* and *Kings* practically completed.
- 597. First deportation of Jews to Babylon.
- 586. Fall of Jerusalem; second deportation.

B—AFTER THE EXILE

- 536 B.C. Return of Jews under Zerubbabel and Joshua.
 520. Ministry of *Haggai* and *Zechariah*.
 516. Dedication of rebuilt Temple.
 458. Ezra arrives from Babylon, bringing Pentateuch.
 444. Nehemiah arrives; *canonization of 'the Law.'*
c. 435. *Malachi's* ministry; *Psalms* begin to be collected.
c. 400. Books of *Joel* and *Jonah* composed.
 333. Persian Empire falls before Alexander the Great.
 301. Judæa becomes subject to Ptolemies of Egypt.
c. 300. *Esther* written; completion of *Proverbs*.
c. 250. Septuagint begun; minor Prophets collected.
c. 210. *Ecclesiastes*, *Chronicles*, *Ezra*, and *Nehemiah* written.
c. 200. '*The Prophets*' added to '*the Law*' and canonised.
 198. Antiochus annexes Judæa to kingdom of Syria.
 168. Persecution of Jews; daily sacrifice suspended.
 167. Maccabæan campaigns; publication of *Daniel*.
 165. Re-dedication of Temple by Judas Maccabæus.
c. 150. *Psalter* and other '*Writings*' admitted into Canon.
c. 110. *Chronicles* admitted into Canon.
 63. Jerusalem taken by Roman troops under Pompey.
 6 A.D. Judæa annexed to Roman province of Syria.
 90. *Song*, *Esther*, and *Ecclesiastes* admitted into Canon.

APPENDIX II

BIBLIOGRAPHY

THIS list does not profess to be an exhaustive catalogue of books dealing with the Higher Criticism. I have restricted it to those which are of common interest, and have added to each a few words descriptive of its aim and character. In addition to general 'introductions,' mention is made of several volumes that deal with particular aspects of the Old Testament, of a few pamphlets which may be useful for popular distribution, and of some books intended for the use of those engaged in teaching children, together with one or two illustrative specimens of modern exegesis.

A. 1. **Patriarchs and Lawgivers**, by the late Rev. F. D. Maurice (1851: Macmillan). Sermons on the Church's Lections, not definitely based on critical data, yet seldom, if ever, inconsistent with later discoveries, and as expositions of Holy Writ unmatched in their moral and spiritual insight.

2. **Prophets and Kings**, by the same (1852: Macmillan). A sequel to the above, expounding the lessons of the period between Samuel and the Restoration.

3. **Lectures on the Jewish Church**, by the late Dean Stanley (3 vols., 1862, 1865, and 1876: Murray). A series of picturesque sketches from Abraham to the dawn of the Christian era; popular, reverent, and liberal.

4. **Inspiration and the Bible**, by Dr. R. F. Horton (1888: Unwin). A plea for a re-arrangement of ideas among Christians.

5. **The Oracles of God**, by Professor W. Sanday (1890: Longmans). Nine sermons on Biblical Inspiration, delivered mostly at Whitehall, with special reference to the Old Testament.

6. **The Divine Library of the Old Testament**, by Professor A. F. Kirkpatrick (1891: Macmillan). Four lectures to clergy, dealing respectively with the origin, preservation, divinity, and value of the Hebrew Scriptures.

7. **The Early Narratives of Genesis**, by the Bishop of Winchester (1892: Macmillan). A brief introduction, touching upon critical and scientific questions, and pointing out the moral and spiritual lessons contained in the record.

8. **The Canon of the Old Testament**, by the same (1892: Macmillan). A critical essay, recounting the process by which the various sections of the Old Testament came to be recognised officially as Holy Writ.

9. **The Doctrine of the Prophets**, by Professor Kirkpatrick (1892: Macmillan). Eighteen lectures, descriptive of the teaching of each of the prophets in relation to the historical circumstances of his age.

10. **Sermons on the Old Testament**, by Professor Driver (1892: Methuen). Twelve addresses to academic audiences, with a prefatory paper on the devotional value of the Old Testament.

11. **The Hope of Israel**, by the Rev. F. H. Woods (1896: T. and T. Clark). Twelve lectures on the argument from prophecy, recasting it into a form suitable for the modern apologist.

12. **The Theology of the Old Testament**, by Professor W. H. Bennett (1896: Hodder and Stoughton). A sketch of the development of Hebrew religion and its main doctrines, contrasting the popular faith with the teaching of the prophets.

13. **A Primer of the Bible**, by the same (1897: Methuen). A short survey of the formation both of the Old Testament and the New.

14. **The Hebrew Prophets**, by Professor R. L. Ottley. One of the 'Oxford Church Text-Books' (Rivingtons), giving an extremely compact presentation of Hebrew prophecy and its leading exponents.

15. **Outlines of Old Testament Theology**, by Dr. C. F. Burney. Another of the 'Oxford Church Text-Books,' explaining succinctly the chief ideas of Hebrew religion, with frequent references to the Scriptural text.

16. **A History of the Hebrew People**, by Professor C. F. Kent (2 vols., 1896, 1897: Smith, Elder), of Brown University, U.S.A. A review of events from the settlement in Canaan to the close of the monarchy, discussing the sources of the narrative.

17. **A History of the Jewish People**, by Professors C. F. Kent and J. S. Riggs (2 vols., 1899, 1900: Smith, Elder). A sequel to the above, continuing the story from the Exile to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

18. **The Churchman's Introduction to the Old Testament**, by the Rev. A. M. Mackay (1901: Methuen). A concise exposition of the critical verdict with regard to each book in the order of the English Canon, with a few prefatory remarks.

19. **Introduction to the Literature of the Bible**, by Professor R. G. Moulton (1901: Isbister), of Chicago. A preface to the 'Modern Reader's Bible' (Macmillan), pleading for a study of the Old and New Testaments, apart from historical criticism, in their *primâ facie* aspect as works of literature.

20. **The Old Testament and the New Scholarship**, by the Rev. J. P. Peters (1901: Methuen), of New York. A discussion of the bearing of evolution and modern criticism on the Hebrew Scriptures, exemplified by special reference to the Psalter and the Book of Daniel.

21. **Old Testament History**, by the Rev. G. W. Wade

(1901 : Methuen). A comprehensive account of the story of the Hebrews, illustrated by several maps.

22. **A Short History of the Hebrews**, by Professor Ottley (1901 : Cambridge University Press). A critical narrative, from the dawn of Jewish history to the opening of the Christian era.

23. **Introduction to the Study of Holy Scripture**, by the Bishop of Ripon (1902 : Dent). A preface to the 'Temple Bible,' dealing mainly with the Old Testament, and addressed to those who fear that its value has been impaired by modern criticism.

24. **Prophetic Ideas and Ideals**, by Professor W. G. Jordan (1902 : Revell), of Kingston, Canada. A series of brief expository studies in prophetic literature, indicating its value for the modern preacher.

25. **The Books of the Old Testament**, by the Rev. J. H. Weatherall (1902 : Essex Hall, Strand). A compact presentation of critical analysis, with short comments on literary and historical subjects.

26. **Old Testament Criticism and the Christian Church**, by Professor J. E. Macfadyen (1903 : Hodder and Stoughton), of Toronto. A temperate plea for a recognition of criticism, pointing out some directions in which it has benefited the Christian reader.

27. **The Biblical History of the Hebrews**, by Canon F. J. Foakes-Jackson (1903 : Arnold). A scholarly review, intended for students in general.

28. **Old Testament History Analysed**, by the Rev. S. Stewart Stitt (Heffer ; Cambridge). An abridgment of the above ; one of the 'Helps by the Way' series.

29. **Messages from the Old Testament**, by the Bishop of Gloucester (1904 : Gardner). A collection of parochial sermons, delivered chiefly at Leeds, with a couple of papers appended.

30. **Holy Scripture and Criticism**, by the Bishop of Winchester (1904 : Macmillan). Twelve addresses to various audiences, dealing chiefly with the Old Testament,

and showing that an acceptance of critical work is compatible with a genuine reverence for the Bible.

31. **The Hebrew Prophet**, by the Rev. L. W. Batten (1905 : Methuen), of New York. A description, moral and psychological, of the prophet as a unique type of religious teacher.

32. **The Religion of Israel**, by Professor Ottley (1905 : Cambridge University Press). A sequel to his 'Short History' (*vide supra*), sketching the development of the Hebrew faith, and picturing its content at various epochs.

33. **Historical Criticism and the Old Testament**, by Father Lagrange (1905 : Catholic Truth Society). A translation of six lectures delivered to French students, with a letter appended on New Testament Criticism.

34. **An Introduction to the Old Testament**, by Professor Macfadyen (1905 : Hodder and Stoughton). A critical estimate of each book in the order of the Jewish Canon, with short comments on its spiritual teaching.

35. **The Tradition of Scripture**, by Dr. W. Barry (1906 : Longmans). A Roman Catholic handbook, discussing the origin of the Old and New Testaments, and treating of their interpretation in the light of critical knowledge.

36. **Hebrew Religion**, by Professor W. E. Addis (1906 : Williams and Norgate). An account of the origin and development of the Hebrew faith to the close of the Exile.

37. **The Evidential Value of Prophecy**, by the Rev. E. A. Edghill (1906 : Macmillan). An inquiry into the use of prophecy, both in the Old Testament and the New, with a prefatory note by the Bishop of Winchester.

38. **The Origin and Permanent Value of the Old Testament**, by Professor Kent (1906 : Hodder and Stoughton).

B. For purposes of popular distribution, or as means of introducing the subject to those who know very little about it, the following booklets and tracts may be mentioned :

1. 'The Higher Criticism,' by Professors Driver and

Kirkpatrick (1s. : Hodder and Stoughton). Three lectures, pointing out the spiritual gain of criticism, with a list of books recommended.

2. 'A Reasonable View of Old Testament Scriptures,' by a Layman (1s. : Stock). A pamphlet, touching upon archæological discoveries, and showing that the Hebrew Bible witnesses to its own inspiration.

3. 'The Old Testament in Modern Light,' by the late Rev. W. A. Moberley (1s. 6d. : S.P.C.K.). Ten parochial sermons, with a preface by the Bishop of Southwark.

4. 'Some Thoughts on Inspiration,' by the Dean of Westminster (6d. : Longmans). Three lectures, delivered in the Abbey, with an address to Sunday-school teachers.

5. 'How we got our Bible,' by Dr. J. Paterson Smythe (6d. : S.P.C.K.). A reprint, containing some reflections suggested by the issue of the Revised Version.

6. 'How God inspired the Bible,' by the same (6d. : S.P.C.K.). Another reprint, advancing from the Lower Criticism, and distinguishing the fact of inspiration from the mechanical theory.

7. 'Information concerning the History and Growth of the Bible,' by Bertram Talbot (6d. : Stock). An essay, intended for the use of Sunday-school teachers.

8. 'The Inspiration of the Old Testament,' by the Rev. A. Moorhouse (1d. : Kelly). A popular lecture, one of the 'What is Christianity?' series.

9. 'Some Moral Difficulties of the Old Testament,' by Dr. D. W. Forrest (1d. : Kelly). Another of the same series.

10. 'The Higher Criticism,' by Dr. W. Barry (6d. : Sands). One of the 'Westminster Lectures,' addressed to Roman Catholics.

11. 'The Growth of the Old Testament,' by Dr. T. C. Fry (3d. : Office of G. S. M., 376, Strand). One of the 'Faith and Freedom' tracts.

12. 'How to View the Old Testament,' by the same (2d. : Office of G. S. M.). Another of the same tracts.

13. 'The Critical Study of the Old Testament,' by Professor Driver (6d. : Griffiths).

C. Those who are in any way responsible for the instruction of the young may be glad to learn of the following volumes :

1. 'The Books of the Bible,' by various authors (Rivington's Edition). Brief commentaries, with notes and introductions, intended for use in public schools.

2. 'How to Teach the Bible,' by the Rev. A. F. Mitchell (Williams and Norgate). Valuable suggestions, based on a careful analysis of the child's mind and its needs.

3. 'How to Read the Bible,' by Professor W. F. Adeney (Clarke). Two lectures to Sunday-school teachers.

4. 'Critical Notes on Sunday-school Lessons from the Pentateuch,' by Professor Driver (Scribner). Designed for publication in the *Sunday-School Times*.

5. 'The Story of the Beginning,' by Mrs. F. Green (Gardner). An elementary exposition of the preface of the Book of Genesis, helpful to parents and teachers.

6. 'The Early Story of Israel,' by Mrs. T. S. Thomas. One of Longmans' 'Simple Guides to Christian Knowledge,' tracing Hebrew history to the time of Samuel.

7. 'The Work of the Prophets,' by Miss Rose E. Selfe. Another of the same series ; a sequel to the above.

8. 'Lessons and Catechisings on the Old Testament,' by Miss Longridge (Mowbray). Three volumes—for seniors, for juniors, and for Catechist respectively—arranged for use in accordance with the method of 'the Catechism.'

9. 'The Dawn of Revelation,' by Miss Bramston (Simpkin). A course of Sunday lessons for two years, the first dealing with history, and the second mainly with the prophets.

10. 'The Bible for the Young,' by Dr. J. Paterson Smythe (Low, Marston). A series still in progress, containing lessons for elementary schools.

11. 'Old Testament History for Schools,' by Dr. Fry (Arnold), Headmaster of Berkhamsted School.

12. 'Old Testament History,' by the Rev. T. Nicklin (3 vols.: Black), of Rossall. Intended for sixth form boys.

13. 'Old Testament History,' by the Rev. W. F. Burnside (Methuen), of Cheltenham. Intended for forms below the sixth.

14. 'Letters to a Godson,' by the Rev. C. Bickersteth (Mowbray). Some fifty chapters, eminently suitable for reading aloud to boys between the ages of eight and thirteen.

D. Of commentaries and other such treatises dealing with special parts of the Old Testament, the number is inexhaustible. The following are mentioned only as striking examples of the way in which modern criticism can not only remove difficulties from the reader's path, but quicken and vivify the material which he is reading.

1. 'Genesis,' by Professor Driver, in the 'Westminster Commentaries' (Methuen).

2. 'Daniel,' by the same, in the 'Cambridge Bible.'

3. 'Job': lectures by the late Dean Bradley (Oxford University Press).

4. 'Psalms and Lamentations,' by Professor Moulton, 2 vols., in the 'Modern Reader's Bible' (Macmillan).

5. 'Isaiah,' by Professor G. A. Smith, 2 vols., in the 'Expositor's Bible' (Hodder and Stoughton).

6. 'Minor Prophets,' by the same, 2 vols., in the same.

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‘Mr. Knight belongs to the sensible—but, we are afraid, still very limited—class of clergymen who see the necessity of giving their people candid guidance on the difficulties raised by Biblical Criticism and the changed conditions of modern thought.’—*The Literary World*.

‘Not merely to many of the clergy, but also to that large number of laymen who are perplexed and distressed about the issues of criticism, a book like this will prove of inestimable advantage. . . . The third appendix is specially valuable.’—*New York Churchman*.

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